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# **The Political Philosophy of Mr. Gandhi**



**BY**

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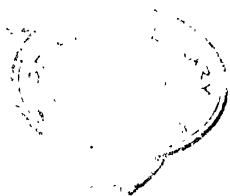
## PREFACE

This essay in political criticism appeared in May of this year as a series of articles in the editorial columns of the *Daily Express* of Madras. The writer is vain enough to think that they might be of further use in a more permanent form. The imprisonment of Mr. Gandhi might, in the eyes of some people, make any criticism of his creed and methods appear at the present moment out of date and unnecessary. But, alas ! for the peace of mind of rulers and the security of states, false but popular political ideas are not killed by the imprisonment of their authors. Ideas have a life of their own, independently of the lives of the men who produce them. The ideas of "Non-Co-operation," of "non-violent" civil disobedience, of the *hartal*, and the *charka*, have not lost their hold upon the leaders of the political party which Mr. Gandhi led nor upon the masses to whom appeals to act on these ideas are even now being made. It is in the hope that there is still time for the refutation of a formidable political theory, and in the belief that there is always time for the explanation of a creed held by large numbers of men that this book is published.

MADRAS,  
20th June, 1922. }

M. RUTHNASWAMY.





## INTRODUCTION

*"Vixere fertes ante Agomemnona multi."*  
There were brave politicians in India before Mr. Gandhi. But it is he that has captured the minds and the hearts of the common people of India. His political creed has struck a responsive chord in the reason and his political methods have been found to be not unsuited to the political capacity of the masses. Compared to the influence which he wields over men, that of the politicians who have gone before him is only the influence of the leader of a political clique or of the manager of a party organisation. There must be something in the message of Mr. Gandhi, there must be something in the ways and means of achieving political freedom or progress that he suggests, which the common people seem to grasp and understand. While the political fighters and leaders whom Mr. Gandhi has made out of date and unfashionable, for a time, if not for ever, in their political addresses and agitations appealed only to the thousands gathered in annual or provincial conferences, Mr. Gandhi has touched to the quick the imagination and fired the enthusiasm of the millions of rural India. The Gokhales, the Mehtas and the Bannerjeas of a decade ago—how far away

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that decade appears to us sometimes now—who moved the political gatherings of their times in eloquent English speeches to constitutional and respectful protests against the policy of Government seem to belong to a generation that has passed away. Whatever may be the political value of Mr. Gandhi's philosophy and methods, whether that philosophy and those methods are matters for praise or for blame, and whatever may be their ultimate fate, of their present vogue and popularity among the masses there can be no doubt. We may blame the masses for their political blindness in acknowledging such leadership, we may attribute the influence of Mr. Gandhi over them to their political backwardness and ineptitude, but we cannot deny the leadership and the influence. We may not accept Mr. Gandhi as the pre-destined guide to the Promised Land of political emancipation but we cannot deny that he has brought politics from the clouds to the earth of rural India. Political discussion which till he took it up was the monopoly of the classes, has now, thanks to him, become the property of the masses. The monster meetings that he has addressed up and down the country during the past three years, the successful *hartals* that he has brought about, the Khaddar campaign that is now in progress throw into the shade all the political demonstrations of the past. Making due allowance for the intimidation, the threat of social boycott, the playing upon the religious fears and racial prejudices of the people that have lain behind

much of the success of all this political demonstration, and, however much we may criticise and condemn the value and character of the result produced, about the result itself there can be no manner of doubt. The masses were politically dead and now they are quick—that is the work of Mr. Gandhi. Whether they will be quick long or whether their political aliveness will last only as long as the political activity of Mr. Gandhi is another matter. But for the present the masses are politically alive. Whatever Mr. Gandhi has done or left undone, he has made politics and especially his brand of it intensely popular.

This popularity of Mr. Gandhi's political philosophy and methods stands out not only when we compare it with the political creed and strategy of constitutional politicians like the late Mr. Gokhale and the late Sir Pherozesha Mehta, but also when we place it side by side with the ideas and the methods of the so-called Extremist agitators of a decade ago. Mr. Gandhi has knocked out of popular esteem not only Moderate opportunists but Nationalist Extremists. He has made unfashionable not only Mr. Gokhale but Mr. Krishnavarma. The Extremist political creed was only more extreme than the Moderate political creed. If the Moderates wanted Dominion Self-Government, the Extremists wanted independence. The political methods of the Extremists were borrowed from Europe. Economic boycott, the cult of racial hatred, physical force *seditis*, political dacoities, the cult of the bomb were

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all instruments of political change borrowed from the armoury of revolutionary Europe. The following deification of Plunder which appeared in the *Jugantar* of August, 1907, shows how different are the doctrines and the methods of Mr. Gandhi. "O Plunder, I worship you to-day, be our helpmate. You so long hid yourself like a canker in a flower and ate away the country's substance. Come and do again here and there resuscitate the old martial spirit behind the public eye. You made me promise that day that by your grace, the Indians when they remembered and worshipped you would get both the money to arm themselves and the military training. That is why I worship you to-day." What a distance have we travelled between this and the doctrine of *ahimsa*, the cult of the spinning wheel, and the peaceful intentions of "non-violent non-co-operation"! Nor can it be said that the Extremist nationalist creed and methods were much more popular than the creed and practice of the Moderates. The revolutionary movement was by no means a popular and widespread movement. Large patches of the country, like Bengal, Maharashtra, and the Punjab were no doubt affected by it. But it was mainly among certain classes of the population that it found most of its adherents. The revolutionary movement of a decade ago was an urban movement. It was a *Bhadralog* or bourgeois movement. It never reached the rural millions of the country. It left them cold or passive. But Mr. Gandhi's movement has gripped the loyalty of rural India, which

is the India that matters at present and for some time to come. For the thousands who were caught in the revolutionary and anarchist conspiracies of the pre-Gandhi time, millions now follow and swear by Mr. Gandhi's creed and methods. While the revolutionary movement was a class conspiracy, compared to it, Mr. Gandhi's is a national movement.

The reason for the much greater success of Mr. Gandhi's appeal it would be interesting to seek. Can it be that Mr. Gandhi's political doctrines and strategy appeal to something that is already in the people? Do they respond to popular instincts and convictions? The humanitarian doctrine of *ahimsa* seems to appeal to one of the most deep-seated sentiments of the Hindu heart. The passivity of the method of "non-violent non-co operation" is probably in the tradition of Hindu political practice. The spinning wheel has been the instrument of whatever industrial life and prosperity there have been in the India of history. Has Mr. Gandhi been acclaimed by the people because he has given to them things "felt in the blood and felt along the heart."? In Mr. Gandhi's appeal to the masses deep has evidently called unto deep. Whatever may be the answer to these question and some answer will be given in the course of this inquiry, the result has been perfect sympathy and perfect understanding between him and his people and the intense popularity of Mr. Gandhi's political



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ideas. It is this popularity of Mr. Gandhi's creed that makes it an object of study and interest to men of affairs as of ideas in India and in countries interested in India. His hold on the people is so great that we cannot afford to ignore him. He has so much influence over the masses that we must get to know and understand his philosophy in order that we may know whither he is leading his people. He can make or mar so much the progress of India that we must examine the implications of his creed and see whether on the whole it makes for progress or for reaction. We may eventually praise him or condemn him. But ignore him we cannot. To know is to understand. And understanding is the beginning of wisdom in our attitude to men and in our treatment of them.

Can it be said that men's treatment of Mr. Gandhi and his doctrine and methods has been full of understanding? Does it serve any political purpose to attack Mr. Gandhi for the wrong thing? Many good causes have lost by a wrong defence. And to attack a position in the wrong way only serves to strengthen it. It is of no use, for instance, charging him with being an anarchist. For he does believe in government and social order. Only, he believes that the government and social order of British rule are not the only ones possible in India. To call him a Bolshevik is only to give him a bad name without the consolation of hanging him. For he does believe in private property and in the individual possession of the means of production and distribu-

tion. Nor is it a relevant or effective criticism of his policy or methods to call them unconstitutional. For he is out to smash the present Government and to call him a rebel leaves him unmoved because he is willing to accept without whining all the consequences of his position. The true method of attack is to give battle on the ground Mr. Gandhi has chosen. If we can prove that Mr. Gandhi's politics will not serve the cause of his country then we shall find a weak place in his armour. If we can show that his campaign against British rule is subversive not only of the present government but of any future government he may hope to establish in the country, then, perhaps, we may hope to disturb the placidity of his mind. It is futile to throw the violence of mobs in carrying out the campaign of non-co-operation against him. For he repudiates the violent consequences, which he did not intend, which he is willing to condemn in no uncertain terms, and for which he is ready to do personal penance. To convince him of the wrong of non-co operation we have to show that non-co-operation is violent not only in deed but in its very intention, that even as a theory, even if it were kept in the region of ideas, it is a call to violence. If we are to convince him of the futility of economic boycott we have to prove not that his economic policy will reduce the total wealth of the country for he is concerned only with the increase of the wealth of the individual, but we have to prove that it will lead to the impoverishment of the individual

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members of the rural population whose champion he is. It is only by giving Mr. Gandhi battle on his own ground, by taking him at his best, by judging his theories as theories and his intentions as intentions without snatching at cheap victories fastening upon the unintended consequences of those intentions and those theories that we shall hope to make any headway against the political philosophy which has captured the imagination of the masses and which is the most considerable contribution, for it is the only original contribution, that India has made to political theory and practice.



## SOME FUNDAMENTAL NOTIONS

One of the most frequent charges made against Mr. Gandhi is that he is an idealist and a theorist. He does not take facts as they are but weaves theories and build visions. He does not take his stand on the facts of India but argues on universal abstract grounds. He does not try to come to close grips with the practical, every-day problems of modern Indian politics but wastes his breath on what might have been or on what should be in the distant future. He is full of abstract theories and universal notions. He may be full of wise saws, but not of modern instances. A diligent study of Mr. Gandhi's writings fails, however, to discover the universal theorist. We do not come up against those fundamental topics which every political theorist true to his profession discusses. Mr. Gandhi does, no doubt, assert general principles from which he reasons and deduces his political maxims. He no doubt presses abstract notions into his service. But in spite of all that Mr. Gandhi is a practical politician. He is severely practical in regard to his aims and objects. His end is to overthrow the present Government, to make his country manufacture all the cloth it needs, to make

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Hindi the common language of India, and to build a Chinese wall against Western civilisation. These ends may be possible or impossible of achievement. But no one can say that they are abstract notions and that they are castles in the air. They may be impracticable but they certainly are not unpractical. Mr. Gandhi's politics are Real-politik of a very realistic kind. He is so realistic that he refuses to look beyond the immediate consequences of his policy. He will not look beyond to-morrow. He declines to frame a scheme of government that will take the place of the British Government of his abhorrence, once he succeeds in disestablishing it. Let us pull down the edifice of British rule—that will be enough work for us and our generation. It would be a mere dissipation of energy and distraction of the mind to be anxious about the successor to the British Government as long as the British Government exists. As practical men, we must first get the evil thing out of the way. It is only visionaries that would trouble about what should be put in its place. Thus, in all Mr. Gandhi's writings we shall not find any attempt to frame a polity for the India of the future. He has resisted the temptation, to which nationalist writers of a few years ago were so susceptible, of framing a constitution for the India of his making.

Mr. Gandhi has been severe with himself not only in regard to his aims and objects, but also in regard to the rest of the staple of political discussion.

If he has been restrained in regard to the ultimate end of his political activity he has been ascetic in regard to other topics so dear to the heart of the political theorist. We may scan his writings ever so carefully but we shall not come upon the discussion of such fundamental topics as the origin of the State or of Government, any definition of the objects of the State or of the duties of Government, a description of the best form of Government or of the relations between the State and the Individual. Nor is it foolish or pedantic to expect such general discussions in a political writer of such eminence and such vogue as Mr. Gandhi. Our ideals determine not only our aims and objects but the methods and policy we adopt in order to attain them. *Cogito, ergo sum*, we are what our ideals are.

Our views about the origin of State and Government determine to a large extent our attitude to States and Governments. The man who believes in the divine origin or in the organic character of the State will not be a revolutionary in a hurry. Rousseau who believed that the State was the result of a social contract, that is to say, that it was an artificial creation of man's hands was the begetter of revolution. To Burke whose profoundest conviction was that government was a delicate equipoise of several powers inherited rather than made, the very suggestion of revolution was anathema. Most political writers possess two or three key-ideas which explain and guide us through all

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the ramifications of their creed. Mr. Gandhi does not render us any such help. He has nothing to do with the origin or the end of the State. He has pigeonholed no ideal constitution for India, except that we may say his future government of India is one that will not know the British. We may hunt in vain in his writings for any general ideas on Society, State, or Government. Mr. Gandhi is severely practical. His writings are eminently "*livres de circonstance*." His business is to overturn the present government and he directs all his artillery to that point. All else is leather and prunella.

But, however severely practical a political writer may try to be, however much he may resist the temptation to launch out into general disquisitions, general ideas will out. Principles are the foundation of political as of other thought. Even though they may be obtained by a process of induction from the facts of life, they are so much the staple of political reasoning that however self-denying a political writer may be, he must make use of them. Mr. Gandhi, although his immediate object is so businesslike, cannot avoid some of those general observations which explain his policy and methods. He does sometimes, though alas! too rarely for the student of political science, give expression to his ideas on such topics as human nature, civil government, the relation between religion and politics, the relation between the State and the Individual and some other subjects of general

political discussion. These observations scattered as they are in his speeches and in his writings in "Young India" may help us to follow Mr. Gandhi through his political Reisebilder and understand his policy and methods.

The proper study of mankind and the first study of the political writer is man. Not institutions but man for whom and by whom these institutions are made is or ought to be the first object of political study. What we think of the State or of government depends on what we think of man. Our views about the relation of the State to the individual, about the authority of the State over its subjects, about the value of the State to the subject, are determined by our views on the origin and the destiny of man. Our political ideas find their fount and origin in our conception of human nature. All the political philosophy of Rousseau issues from the famous principle which he proclaimed at the very beginning of his work on the Social Contract: "Man is born free and is everywhere in chains." From this theory of the political origin of man, the theory of the *volonte generale*, or of the right to revolution follows as inevitably as the conclusion from the premises of a syllogism. If we would know and understand Mr. Gandhi's political philosophy we must know what he thinks of man and human nature.

"I believe that people are by nature loving and peaceful" (1)—this is the starting point of Mr.

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(1) "Young India," February 16, 1921.



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Gandhi's creed and methods. It is this view of man and of human nature that explains Mr. Gandhi's belief in the possibility of "non-violent non-co-operation", in the rapidity of human progress, in the political efficacy of suffering as well as his antipathy to certain political and social arrangements. Leave man alone, and he will be good. Give him power, and he will use it well. Place the good before him and he will seize it with both his hands. Knowledge of the good leads irresistibly to the possession of the good. There is no such thing as original sin, or a natural inclination to evil. "Hindus are not sinful by nature. They are sunk in ignorance" (2), that is why they are politically backward, that is why they cannot rise to the heights of non-violent non-co-operation. But prove to men the goodness of good and the badness of evil, and they will accept the one and renounce the other. Speaking of the way in which he would deal with the criminal, Mr. Gandhi says (3) "You set this armed robber down as an ignorant brother; you intend to reason with him at a suitable opportunity; you argue that he is after all a fellowman; you do not know what prompted him to steal, you, therefore, decide that when you can, you will destroy the man's motive for stealing. Whilst you are thus reasoning with yourself, the man comes again to

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(2) "Young India," May 4, 1921.

(3) Hind-Swaraj or Indian Home Rule p. 56.—Tagore & Co's edition.

steal. Instead of being angry with him, you take pity on him. You think that this stealing habit must be a disease with him. Henceforth, therefore, you keep your doors and windows open ; you change your sleeping place, and you keep your things in a manner most accessible to him. The robber comes again, and is confused, as all this is new to him ; nevertheless, he takes away your things. But his mind is agitated. He enquires about you in the village, he comes to learn about your broad and loving heart, he repents, he begs your pardon, returns you your things, and leaves off the stealing habit."

Persons who have other views of man and the making of man's character might object to the suddenness with which conversion follows upon conviction. Nor does Mr. Gandhi himself say that his method of character-making is always and everywhere certain of success. But he believes that "at least in the majority of cases, if not indeed in all, the force of love and pity is infinitely greater than the force of arms. There is harm in the exercise of brute force, never in that of pity." This belief in the natural goodness of man has for its obvious corollary a belief in the capacity of man unaided by education or environment or the help of his fellows to attain to virtue. "Nature," says Mr. Gandhi, (4) "has implanted in the human breast

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(4) Hind-Swaraj or Indian Home Rule, p. 68.—Tagore & Co's edition.

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ability to cope with any difficulty or suffering that may come to man unprovoked." Holding such a roseate view of man and his ability to achieve the good, whether moral or political, is it any wonder that Mr. Gandhi believes and believes most honestly and without any reservations that civil disobedience can be peaceful, that political change has only to be desired in order to be achieved, and that revolution is the best way of effecting reform? Mr. Gandhi's glorification of human nature will remind students of political science, of another political prophet's glorification of human nature which issued in political theories similar to those of Mr. Gandhi. Rousseau in his letter to Christopher de Beaumont, Archbishop of Paris, laid bare the foundations of his political philosophy when he wrote "*Le principe fondamental de toute morale, sur lequel J'ai raisonne' dans tous mes ecrits \* \* \* \* \** est que l'homme est un être naturellement bon, aimant la justice et l'ordre ; qu'il n'y a point de perversité originelle dans le coeur humain, et que les premiers mouvements de la nature sont toujours droits." The political "credo" of Mr. Gandhi as of Rousseau is explained by his philosophy of human nature. This optimistic view of human nature is especially seen in his theory of human progress. According to Mr. Gandhi progress has only to be thought of in order to be reached. All birth, he says, takes place in a moment. There is no such thing as slowly acquired freedom. Freedom is like

a birth. Till we are justly free, we are slaves. Everybody and every nation is always ripe for Swaraj (5). He conceives the possibility of a nation throwing away an age-long curse in a year, of a nation that can shed the drink habit as we shed our garments, of a nation returning to its original industry and suddenly utilising its spare hours to manufacture sixty crores worth of cloth during a single year (6). In regard to the growth of national unity, he feels that India is realising her unity with undreamt of velocity. He believes that there is every possibility of evolving sufficient consciousness of unity and strength to make our demand for immediate Swaraj irresistible (7). He thinks it is possible to purify India of the sin of untouchability in five months (8).

Next to a political writer's views on human nature we have to enquire what he thinks of religion if we would know and understand his political views. A man's political philosophy is to a large extent determined by his belief or disbelief in a God, and whether that God is a personal God or the sum-total of all existences. The theist and the pantheist cannot think alike of the State, of civil obedience, and of political change. St. Augustine's "City of God," Dante's

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(5) "Young India," October 20, 1921.

(6) Ibid, September 29, 1921.

(7) Ibid, March 16, 1921.

(8) Ibid, May 4, 1921.

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"De Monarchia," Kautilya's "Arthashastra," Morley's "Compromise," De Maistre's "Du Pape," Frederic Harrison's Essays on Society are, each of them, founded on a definite religious creed. One of the fundamental ideas of Mr. Gandhi's political philosophy is that religion lies at the core of all human life and endeavour. Both in his speeches and in his writings in "*Young India*" he proclaims that politics to be useful or popular or true must be founded on religion. To spiritualise politics, he declares, is his mission in India. He had found politics in the rut of Western materialism and opportunism, he would raise it from the low estate into which it had fallen, he would marry it to religion. Religion is the breath of his being, and his first complaint is that India is becoming irreligious<sup>(9)</sup>. Man cannot advance politically without becoming more moral and more religious. The success of non-co-operation depends on the personal purity of the individuals who take part in it. India is subject to foreign rule because she has fallen a victim to Western materialism and the lust for wealth. Back to the stern asceticism of our Rishis and Bhaktas. Political freedom will result only from moral freedom, *i.e.*, freedom from the fear of death, or punishment, or poverty. The fear of God is the beginning of political wisdom. Trust in God will procure us our political desires.

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(9) Hind-Swaraj or Indian Home Rule, p. 24—Tagore & Co's edition.

How simple and touching is Mr. Gandhi's expression of an almost Jewish faith in the Messianic character of God in the following passage, taken, let it be noted, from an editorial article of his in a weekly paper : "If we can but throw ourselves into His lap as our only help, we shall come out scatheless through every ordeal that the Government may subject us to. If nothing happens without His permitting, where is the difficulty in believing that He is trying us even through this Government. I would take our complaints to Him and be angry with Him for so cruelly trying us. And He will soothe us and forgive us if we will but trust in Him!"

Although Mr. Gandhi insists so much on Religion being the foundation of political life, as of all life, he will not insist on everyone conforming to one particular form of religion. Even Rousseau, who would protect his "religion civile" by law, appears intolerant by the side of Mr. Gandhi. "There is only one God for us all," he says, "whether we find him through the Koran, the Bible, the Zend Avesta, the Talmud or the Gita." Mr. Gandhi is nowhere more Hindu than in this all embracing tolerance of religions. His well known and powerful support of the Khilafat movement is not based upon any conviction of the rights or wrongs of the Sultan of Turkey nor upon any fear of the political consequences of a particular solution of this problem to the Moslem world. It is based upon the simple

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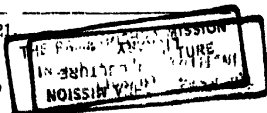
fear that that particular solution would be un-Islamic. He has been persuaded by the leaders of the Khilafat movement to believe that the Treaty of Sevres is a denial of one of the fundamental doctrines of Islam. That is enough for him. The Khilafat movement is a religious movement and Mr. Gandhi must be in it. Religion is all or nothing to him. Religion is his politics and his politics is part of his religion. One of the reasons, perhaps the most powerful reason, why Mr. Gandhi has girded his loins against Western civilisation and English education is that he has somehow come to be persuaded that Western civilisation and English education have loosened the hold of Hinduism upon the intellectual classes of India. Hence his cry of *Ecrasez l'infame*. The British Government is satanic because it is indifferent to the Khilafatists, because by its so-called godless schools it has made the present generation of educated men unreligious if not irreligious, because it does nothing to put an end to the killing of cows. And it is because he believes that political freedom or Swaraj will enable India to recover her lost soul that he has taken up politics with such passionate enthusiasm and will not accept any compromise or half-way house on the road to self-rule. In Mr. Gandhi's eyes nothing less than the fate of a religion is at stake in the political agitation in which he has been engaged.

That Mr. Gandhi's politics is determined and coloured by religion is proved not only by the *obiter*

*dicta* on the relations between religion and politics scattered through his writings but still more by the religious character of the instruments he has pressed into his political service. Satyagraha, fasting, penance, suffering self-imposed or voluntarily sought are Mr. Gandhi's methods of political agitation (10). The uniqueness of his political warfare consists in this—that methods which have been used and found successful in the propagation of religion are now used to promote a political idea. For the first time in the history of the world voluntary suffering and sacrifice are expected to cause changes in the policies of governments. Sacrifice and suffering have spread religions, broken the persecuting religious policy of governments and secured the reign of religion in the hearts of men. The blood of martyrs has been the seed of the church. Therefore, why should not suffering and sacrifice convert governments to a righteous policy, bring about a change in the hearts of rulers, and serve the ends of political progress? Why should not the sweat, if not the blood of political martyrs, be the seed of a free and self-governing India? Sacrifice and suffering there have been in the secular course of political battle. But such sacrifice and suffering have been produced by men refusing to obey an iniquitous law or a tyrannical ruler. Men have suffered for protests against misgovernment in pri-

(10) "Young India," Aug. 4, 1921

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son or on the scaffold. A number of such protests and the consequent punishments served to educate public opinion to a sense of the iniquity of the rule under which men were living. And when the propitious time arrived, this public opinion roused to the point of insurrection and supported by the necessary physical force delivered its attack on the rule it abhorred and swept it off the face of the earth. That is how suffering and sacrifice have served the cause of revolution whether in seventeenth century England, or in eighteenth century France, or in twentieth century Russia. But that is not how Mr. Gandhi wants suffering and sacrifice to subserve political progress. His view of suffering is more religious. He expects suffering to convert the hearts of men to political righteousness. He really expects that suffering will work a change in the hearts of the rulers of men. He believes in "the absolute efficiency of innocent suffering." He expects governments to repent and do penance <sup>(11)</sup>. Not only governments and rulers but subjects would be politically benefited by a course of suffering. "I venture to say," he declared during the Satyagraha week of 1920, "that there is nothing so powerful as fasting and prayer that would give us the requisite discipline, spirit of self sacrifice, humility and resoluteness of will without which there can be no real progress" <sup>(12)</sup>. That Mr.

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(11) "Young India," May 25, 1921.

(12) "Young India," Mar. 31, 1920.

Gandhi's view of suffering in politics is mainly religious is proved by the fact that he applies the doctrine of vicarious suffering to politics. He has more than once fasted as penance and peace-offering for the excesses of mobs, who have not been able to keep the peace of non-co-operation. He has called off strikes and lockouts by threatening to go a fasting. He has advised his followers to make as far as it lay in their power, the way to prison easy, believing that the incarceration of non-co-operators would lay up somewhere a treasure of political merit upon which we may draw at the proper time for the emancipation of the country.

Besides his views on human nature and on the place of religion in politics and the peculiarly religious character of his instruments of political propaganda and action there is nothing else that calls for special mention in an introductory review of his fundamental political notions. For the rest, Mr. Gandhi adopts most of the advanced popular political ideas of his and other times. He accepts the State as necessary for human life for "submission to the laws of the State is the price a citizen pays for his personal liberty" (13). Government is an agency set up by the people (14) and therefore if it does not satisfy them they will change it. This is his justification for advocating a revolutionary change of government, Swaraj is freedom for

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(13) "Young India," Nov. 10, 1921.

(14) "Young India," May 25, 1921.

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everyone, the smallest among us to do as he likes without any physical interference with his liberty <sup>(15)</sup> But it would not be fair to judge Mr. Gandhi's political philosophy by these latter notions which he owes to the Zeitgeist. He must be judged by his own peculiar and unique contribution to political theory and practice.

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(15) "Young India," Jan. 15, 1921.

### "NON-VIOLENT NON-CO-OPERATION."

Men do not choose words for nothing. Although the marriage of thought to language is not always happy and rarely perfect—a fact which is perhaps the origin of the cynical saying that language has been invented to conceal thought—yet our words, especially at great moments or in difficult situations, are a fairly faithful rendering of our thoughts. The words "non-violent non-co-operation" may sound rather bizarre to the English reader. They seem to be too negative, too privative for the positive practical genius of the English language. Why should not one say peaceful or passive resistance and be done with it? But it is not wilfully that Mr. Gandhi has coined the words "non-violent non-co-operation" to express his philosophy of political action. The phrase may appear un-English with its indiscriminate application of the negative Latin prefix to nouns and adjectives. But Mr. Gandhi recognises no obligations to the English language. He is concerned only with a loyal rendering of his ideas, and if the English language suffers in the process, so much the worse for the English language. Non-violent Non-Co-operation is a better rendering of Mr.

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Gandhi's thought than passive resistance. Although he made use of the latter expression in his South African days, he has renounced it in these latter times. For, as he maintains and proves, there is a world of difference between passive resistance and non-violent Non-Co-operation.

In his earlier writings Mr. Gandhi did identify passive resistance with soul force or Satyagraha as in the following eloquent eulogy (1). "Passive resistance is an all-sided sword; it can be used anyhow; it blesses him who uses it and him against whom it is used. Without drawing a drop of blood, it produces far-reaching results. It never rusts and cannot be stolen." But of late he has given up this description of his method for he feels it does not adequately describe it. "Passive resistance," he says (2), "is a misnomer. Non-Co-operation in the sense used by me must be non-violent and therefore neither punitive, nor vindictive, nor based on malice, ill-will or hatred." A passive resister need not fulfil any of the moral conditions required of the non-violent non-co-operator. He need not purge his soul of all thoughts of hatred, vindictiveness or self-complacency. The passive resister does not care about the social consequences of his action, nor about the attendant circumstances. Provided he himself acts without violence he may be at peace with his conscience. A passive resister

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(1) Hind-Swaraj or Indian Home Rule, p. 65.—Tagore & Co's edition.

(2) Freedom's battle—edn. Ganesh and Co., p. 191.

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is a breaker of individual laws and not a general and comprehensive rebel. But the non-co-operator of Mr. Gandhi's ideal is the very opposite of such a passive resister. He must be free from all thoughts of hatred against the government. He must look at it more in pity than in anger. Absolute freedom from violence is a condition precedent to non-co-operation (3). Non-Co-operation requires solid and silent self-sacrifice (4). It challenges our honesty and our capacity for national work. A non-co-operator strives to compel attention and to set an example not by his violence but by his unobtrusive humility. Mr. Gandhi hopes that every non-co-operator will recognise the need of being humble and self-restraining (5). Non-co-operators have to observe perfect chastity, adopt poverty, follow truth and cultivate fearlessness (6). No such moral education or self-purification is required in a passive resister. For passive resistance is a political weapon used to obtain a political result, whereas Non-Co-operation is a spiritual weapon used to obtain a political result. Passive resistance has nothing to do with the character of the individual employing it, but Non-Co-operation would fail of its purpose if it did not regenerate the individual who used it. Passive

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(3) *Freedom's Battle*—edn. Ganesha and Co., p. 253.

(4) *Freedom's Battle*—edn. Ganesha and Co., p. 296.

(5) *Freedom's Battle*—edn. Ganesha and Co., p. 297.

(6) *Hind-Swaraj or Indian Home Rule*, p. 67.—Tagore & Co' edition.

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resistance means breaking of a particular law, whereas Non-Co-operation is a general philosophy of revolt. Passive resistance, apart from the obnoxious law in question, recognises the authority of the State, but Non-Co-operation by withdrawing co-operation from the government is a protest against and a denial of the existence of the State. Passive resistance is a challenge to a government, Non-co-operation is a challenge to the State.

Mr. Gandhi is, therefore, perfectly justified in drawing a distinction between passive resistance and Non-Co-operation. And he is well warranted in making use of the words non-violent non-co-operation to characterise his political methods. For, his political method is purely and utterly negative. Passive resistance, in spite of its being passive, is very active, for all resistance whether you go out into the street to resist or stay at home to resist is active. There may be a difference in degree but no difference in kind between the two forms of resistance. The epithet passive is a mere blind and may deceive only those who derive consolation from words. But Non-Co-operation, when compared to passive resistance, is eminently negative in its method. It is negative in its intentions if not always in the results. Taking his stand on the thesis that States and governments exist only with the co-operation of the governed with the governors (7). Mr. Gandhi believes that the most effective way

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(7) *Freedom's Battle*—Ganesh and Co., p. 292.

## NON-VIOLENT NON-CO-OPERATION 29

of curing a bad government of its tyrannies is to refuse it that co-operation. Such a method is especially to be recommended to a conquered and disarmed people. We do not know if Mr. Gandhi will counsel active and armed resistance to an armed people. But he is probably of the opinion that the very possession of arms would put the fear of God into the hearts of the rulers of such a people. However that may be, Mr. Gandhi's own method of resistance to an unjust government is to withdraw co-operation from it. Mr. Gandhi's method of fighting evil is to dissociate himself from evil. "Whoever," he says <sup>(8)</sup>, is satisfied that the British Government represents the activity of Satan has no choice left but to dissociate himself from it." And his various stages of Non-Co-operation have been arranged in an ascending series of importance beginning from the renunciation of titles and ending in the grand climacteric of refusal to pay taxes. Thus, firstly if we might not help an evil government nor receive any favours from it, we must give up titles of honour which were no longer a proud possession <sup>(9)</sup>. Secondly, lawyers who were in reality honorary officers of the Court should cease to support Courts that upheld the prestige of an unjust government and the people must be able to settle their disputes and quarrels by private arbitration <sup>(10)</sup>. Similarly parents should withdraw their

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(8) *Freedom's Battle*—Ganesin and Co., p. 293.

(9) *Ibid*, p. 277.

(10) *Ibid*.



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children from the public schools and they must evolve a system of national or private education totally independent of the government. Next, he would ask the nation to sacrifice its liking for the fineries of Europe and Japan and be satisfied with the coarse but beautiful fabrics woven on their handlooms out of yarns spun by millions of their sisters <sup>(11)</sup>. Then the officials of government will be asked to withdraw themselves from the service of the British government, for no government, much less the Indian government, can submit if the people cease to serve it <sup>(12)</sup>. The last stage of all is the refusal to pay taxes, <sup>(13)</sup>. The withdrawal, of the police and the soldiers from the service of government and the suspension of the payment of taxes are no doubt the last stages in the movement of Non-Co-operation. They are only stages, and the fact that Mr. Gandhi has enjoined or approved of them shows that they were not mere threats. 28,169

Mr. Gandhi will accept no compromise, no reservations in his policy of Non-Co-operation. It is either co-operation or non-co-operation with a government. There is no half-way house between the two. Co-operation with a just government is a duty; Non-co-operation with an unjust Government is equally a duty. This sternly intransigent

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(11) Freedom's Battle, p. 278.

(12) Ibid, p. 202.

(13) Ibid, p. 202.

spirit is seen especially in his firm refusal to have anything to do with the Reformed Councils. When these were established, there were some Nationalists who would enter the Councils with a view to carrying on tactics of obstruction so as to make the working of the Reforms impossible. But Mr. Gandhi firmly refused his assent to any such transactions with the 'devil.' Asked by an interviewer in 1920 whether he would look with favour upon the proposal to enter the Councils and to carry on either obstructive tactics or to decline to take the oath of allegiance Mr. Gandhi said :—"No ; as an accurate student of Non-Co-operation, I consider that such a proposal is inconsistent with the true spirit of Non-Co-operation." This instance of the boycott of the Councils is proof of the perfect consistency of Mr. Gandhi. Non-Co-operation could be practised within the Councils. But to stand for election to the Councils was to accept the Reforms Act. To accept the Reforms Act was an act of co operation with the government. It would have been to introduce the wooden horse within the castle of Non-Co-operation. It would have been to dilute with water the strong wine of a manful creed. Therefore it must not be. The boycott of the Councils is the most negative form of Non-Co-operation that the movement has thrown up.

This negative tone runs through the whole gamut of Non-Co-operation. Not only are we to non-co-

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operate with government but we must be non-violent in our Non-Co-operation. We must refrain from co-operation; we must also refrain from violence. We do not know whether Mr. Gandhi deliberately coined the word non-violent to describe the character of his method of Non-Co-operation. But it looks as if the epithet was chosen to suit a particular species of the opposite of violence. Mr. Gandhi is a man of peace. He would have his Non-Co-operation peaceful. But there are two ways of preserving peace. One is by refraining from violence, the other is by actively taking all measures, peaceful, of course, that may be necessary to prevent violence. The one form of peaceableness is negative, the other is positive. It is the negative form of peaceableness that Mr. Gandhi has in his mind when he calls his Non-Co-operation non-violent. Refraining from non-violence is enough to make the complete Non-Co-operator. He must not use force even to repel the *zoolum* of the policeman, not because force is useless, but because force is immoral. He must not repel or even escape from arrest if the guardians of law and order come to arrest him for some act of non-co-operation with any law. He must not plead in English Courts of Law. If he cannot turn the other cheek to the tyrant he must at least allow himself to be struck on one. In picketing at taverns and foreign cloth shops he must merely show intelligent drinkers or buyers the error of their ways but must not use even the least force to dissuade them from entering those houses

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of evil. Enthusiastic picketers may in the sacred cause of prohibition outrun the bounds of non-violence. But the vagaries of the follower must not be laid at the door of the leader. There must be no demonstration not only against a bad cause but even in favour of a good one. At meetings there must not only be no hissing against unpopular statements but there must be no clapping of hands in applause of a popular view. Non-violence, according to Mr. Gandhi, is not merely peaceful. It is negatively peaceful. It is a self-denying ordinance rather than a setting free of the powers of man. It is self-control rather than a peaceful control over others. It is not peace in action but peace in repose. It is not grappling with evil, but avoiding it. Mr. Gandhi's device of non-violent non-co-operation is not so much a political expedient as an intellectual process. It is not so much an attempt to come to grips with a political evil as a denial of its existence or rather of its right to exist. It is the Everlasting Nay of modern Indian politics.

## WESTERN CIVILISATION

Mr. Gandhi's politics are deduced from fundamental principles. They are neither occasional nor casual. They are not a protest against one or two acts of the British Government as are the politics of most politicians in India. It is true that the Punjab wrongs and the Khilafat Question galvanised him into his recent political activity. It is true that he has made people believe that with the acceptance by the British government of his solution of these two problems of modern Indian politics he will have reached his political ends. With the grant of full self-government to India on the lines of the responsible government of the Dominions of the British Empire his political mission will have been fulfilled. But Mr. Gandhi, as we have said, is a practical politician in spite of his political theories. He knows how to put a restraint on his political ambitions. Although at one time he was an advocate of full independence for India he has been persuaded by opportunist nationalists not to go outside the British Empire for self-government for his country. Although he was an adept believer in the unexpurgated gospel of Non-Co-operation, he,

like any shrewd man of affairs, was willing to put India through her paces by dividing up the journey to complete Non-Co-operation into four or five stages. But, however governed by circumstances in regard to this or that piece of political strategy he has been throughout his career, faithful to the star of his political philosophy. This is hatred of the civilisation of Europe.

Mr. Gandhi's attitude to British rule in India is only a part and consequence of his attitude to Western civilisation. His hatred of the government of India as at present constituted is only a part of the larger hatred of the civilization of which that government is the instrument and representative. His view of Western civilization is older, more fundamental, more impersonal than his views on British rule in India. While his conviction of the utter uselessness and harmfulness of British rule to India is of yesterday, his views on Western civilization date almost from the years of his political discretion. While his attitude to the British government in India has been created by recent events, his views on Western civilization are the convictions of a life time. Although he is now engaged in a conflict with the government, the real and ultimate objective of his attack is Western civilization. This is the ogre which he has set out to slay. This is the *fons et origo mali* which he is out to dry up. An attack on British rule is only a skirmish with one of the light troops of the

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enemy. It may be good practice for the central attack—but it is only practice after all. The enemy, whom he thinks worthy of his steel, is western civilization. His views on western civilization, it is true, do not form the stuff of his political philosophy. The criticism of an alien doctrine is not the main part of one's own. Nor is it necessary to establish the truth of one's creed. But we shall never be able to understand the peculiar character of Mr. Gandhi's political philosophy and methods if we do not attempt to understand the inspiration that gave them birth. In order to realise the strength and sincerity of his political convictions, we must know and realise the motive that drove him into them. It is his hatred of Western civilisation that is at once the source and the explanation of his political philosophy. The poverty of his people, the iniquities of the British government, the economic subjection of India to foreigners may be the reasons why he has unfurled the banner of revolt against British rule. But these are only the secondary causes, being the consequences of the primary cause, of his political theory and action. The final cause, the "*causa causans*" of Mr. Gandhi's political philosophy and methods is his hatred of the civilisation of the West.

As I have already pointed out this attitude of Mr. Gandhi to Western civilisation is not the product of an occasion, the passing phase of an

irritated mind, or an argument *ad hoc*. It was the conviction of his soul and revealed itself long before he began to think ill of British rule. As early as 1908 Mr. Gandhi published a series of articles in the "*Indian Opinion*" of South Africa in answer to the theories of the Indian school of violent revolutionaries who were then in some vogue in London, South Africa and India. These articles were gathered into a book published first in Gujarati and then, to defend Mr. Gandhi against unjust criticism, in English under the title of "*Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule*." But although written in 1908, these articles were the fruit of the reading and thinking of many and an experience of twenty years. *Hind Swaraj or Indian Home Rule* contains a formidable indictment of Western civilisation. Taking his cue from Carpenter's *Civilisation—Its Cause and Cure*, Mr. Gandhi looks upon Western civilisation as a disease. The main principle of that civilisation is "that bodily welfare is the object of life" "It talks neither of morality nor of religion. Its votaries calmly state that their business is not to teach religion. Some even consider it to be a superstitious growth. Others put on the cloak of religion, and prate about morality. This civilisation is irreligion and it has taken such a hold on the people in Europe that those who are in it appear to be half mad. They lack real physical strength or courage. They keep up their energy



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by intoxication. They can hardly be happy in solitude. Women, who should be the queens of households, wander in the streets, or slave away in factories." In a chapter entitled "The Condition of England," he draws a very lurid picture of the political and social condition of that country. But Mr. Gandhi's concern with Western civilisation is not so much on account of England as of his own country. He hates Western civilisation because it has brought India to its present pass. The gravamen of his charge against the British rulers of India is that they have introduced the marks and instruments of Western civilisation into a country which had not known it before and was all the better for not knowing it. "Why was India lost," asks Mr. Gandhi and answers, "Because we treated with Western civilization. We fell in love with English commerce and let the East India Company stay in the country"

Railways, lawyers, and doctors have impoverished us (3). declares Mr. Gandhi. It must be manifest to all that but for the railways the English could not have such a hold on India as they have. The railways too have spread the bubonic plague. Without them the masses could not move from place to place. They are the carriers of plague germs (4). Railways have also increased the frequency of famines because owing

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(3) Hind Swaraj, p. 27.

(4) Ibid, p. 27.

to the facility of means of locomotion people sell out their grain and it is sent to the dearest markets. Through railways bad men fulfil their evil designs with greater rapidity. The holy places of India have through railways become unholy, because rogues visit them in order to practise their roguery (5). Railways, according to Mr. Gandhi, are not merely a nuisance, they are an impertinence. God, he says, set a limit to man's locomotive ambition in the construction of his body. Man has proceeded to discover means of overriding the limit. But in thus attempting the impossible, man comes in contact with different natures and different religions and is utterly confounded. Railways are not only dangerous, they are irreligious. Through them man has gone away further from his Maker (6). Railways are only a species of machinery. But machinery is the chief symbol of modern civilisation; it represents a great sin. If the machinery craze grows in this country, it will become an unhappy land. The workers in the mills of Bombay have become slaves. The condition of the women working in the mills is shocking. Instead of welcoming machinery as a boon we should look upon it as an evil.

This violent dislike of railways and machinery has for its positive counterpart a call back to the

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(5) Ibid, p. 27.

(6) Ibid, p. 31.

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simple, stationary economic life of ancient India. To regain her lost soul India must go back to her traditional economic life. India must go back to the village and to agriculture. Political independence or even self-government is impossible till India becomes once more self-contained (7). The cottage industry of India must regain its lost position if India is to be politically herself. A national government will multiply handlooms and spinning wheels and flood the country with plenty of handspun (8). The *charka* is not only the symbol but the instrument of the progress of India. Perfect economic independence is the sign of political freedom. India cannot live unless her homes are self-supporting (9). Before we can be wholly free we must be economically independent (10). But although Mr. Gandhi desires independence in regard to India's economic relations with other countries, he would have regulation and restraint in regard to the internal life of the country. A national government will prevent millowners from unduly raising prices (11). Millowners must regulate their manufactures and their profits in accordance with the requirements of the nation and principally for the Indian market. (12).

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(7) "Young India," Nov. 3, 1921.

(8) Ibid.

(9) Ibid, Sept, 22, 1921.

(10) Ibid, July 6, 1921.

(11) Ibid, Nov. 3, 1921.

(12) Ibid, July 6, 1921.

Lawyers do not fare any better than railways at Mr. Gandhi's hands. His firm opinion is that the lawyers have enslaved India <sup>(13)</sup>. The profession teaches immorality <sup>(14)</sup>. The duty of the lawyers is to take the side of their clients and to find out ways and arguments in favour of the clients. The lawyers, as a rule, advance quarrels instead of repressing them. Lawyers are glad when men dispute. Petty pleaders actually manufacture disputes. Their touts, like so many leeches, suck the blood of the poor people. But the greatest injury they have done to India is that they have tightened the English grip on the country. It would not be possible for the English to carry on their government without law courts. It is wrong to consider that courts are established for the benefit of the people. Those who want to perpetuate their power do so through the courts. Men were less unmanly when they settled their disputes either by fighting or by asking their relatives to decide upon them.<sup>(15)</sup>

Like lawyers, doctors have been used by the English to rivet their hold on India. Doctors have almost unhinged us. Mr. Gandhi is sometimes tempted to think that quacks are better than highly qualified doctors. Doctors by curing men of their diseases only increase vice and self-

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(13) *Ibid.* p. 36.

(14) *Ibid.* p. 37.

(15) Hind-Swaraj, p. 76

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indulgence which should be allowed to be punished by their natural consequences. Hospitals are institutions for propagating vice. European doctors are the worst of all. They practise vivisection and violate Hindu religious instincts. Most of their medical preparations contain either animal fat or spirituous liquor. To study European medicine is to deepen Indian slavery<sup>(16)</sup>.

In his opposition to Western civilisation Mr. Gandhi would attack it in its source in India. Education through the English language and literature and instruction in modern science are the means by which the ideas and the institutions of Europe have been introduced into India. Mr. Gandhi will have none of English education. To give the millions of India a knowledge of English is to enslave them<sup>(17)</sup>. Hypocrisy, tyranny and other vices have increased. English-knowing Indians have not hesitated to cheat and strike terror into the people. Is not the use of English in the law courts a sign of slavery? India should go back to Sanskrit and her own vernaculars. The peoples of India should learn each other's languages. If a common language for India is wanted, we have Hindi ready to our hands. English has paralysed and emasculated the Indian mind. Tilak and Ram Mohan Roy would have been far greater men if

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(16) Ibid, p. 40-42.

(17) Ibid, p. 72.

they had not had the contagion of English learning. What Sankaracharya alone was able to do, the whole army of English-knowing men cannot do. Was Guru Govind a product of English education English education has emasculated Indians, constrained their intellect, and the manner of imparting this education has rendered them effeminate. The pre-British period was not a period of slavery. India had some sort of Swaraj under pre-British rule. Pratap was born under Akbar's rule, Shivaji under that of Aurangazib. But now, alas, several feudatory chiefs bend the knee to the political agent because of their English education (18).

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(18) " Young India," April 13, 1921.

## CRITICISM

### “NON-VIOLENT NON-CO-OPERATION”

Although the French maxim “Tout comprendre c’est tout pardonner” may appear in the eyes of a strict moralist too lax a principle to be of any use in judging our fellows, yet no one will deny that sympathetic understanding is the beginning of fair criticism. In the foregoing pages Mr. Gandhi has been allowed to reveal himself in his own words. I think I have done no injustice to his doctrines by putting on them an interpretation they will not bear. Mr. Gandhi is so direct and unequivocal that it is not easy to misunderstand him. He says what he means and means what he says. He is not an ordinary politician out to make a career for himself. He has, therefore, no reservations to make, he does not require the aid of “*double-entendres*” to serve him on the day of explanations. Not afraid of the consequences of what he says or does, he has laid bare his innermost convictions. He has not thought it necessary to temper the wind of his doctrine to a shorn people nor to water its wine down to suit the stomach of alien rulers. He has found the truth and preaches it whole and pure. The fundamental

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difference between Mr. Gandhi and the older school of politicians is revealed in the style of Mr. Gandhi's speeches and writings. The simple, short, direct, clear, hammer-stroke sentences are worlds apart from the splendid rhetoric of a Pherozeshah Mehta or the purple patches of a Surendranath Bannerjea. If ever the style was the man, Mr. Gandhi's style is himself all over. His is not the wheedling, insinuating, flattering language of a politician speaking to capture the votes of constituents. His is the unequivocal fiery, consuming, language of the prophet. You may not like the prophet nor his sayings, but you cannot mistake their meaning.

What, then, are we to make of Mr. Gandhi's political philosophy? Is it mere sound and fury signifying nothing? Or is it the philosopher's stone that will change the iron and brass of Indian politics into gold or silver? Are his ideas the outpourings of a fanatic or the concentrated essence of political wisdom? Is Mr. Gandhi the prophet that will lead India into the promised land of freedom or at least to whom has been vouchsafed the vision of the heights of Pisgah? Or, is he only one of the numerous tribe of politicians who are so much in love with their own particular nostrums that they will not allow their country to be saved by others than themselves? Is Mr. Gandhi's political theory the law and the prophets of Indian politics? Or, is it only one of its apocryphal books? In



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answer to these questions it is necessary to state at the outset that nothing is gained by calling Mr. Gandhi names. Even if we have not the vision nor the evidence that will allow us to call him a saint, his undoubted sincerity, his perfect freedom from cant and humbug, his readiness to do and dare the worst in defence of his ideas, and not for the first time in his life, ought to silence the sarcastic tongue and the slandering whisper. We shall clear the ground by saying that Mr. Gandhi is not a madman nor a fanatic, nor an anarchist. He has repudiated anarchy more than once and in the strongest terms. A philosophy of anarchy can never be popular for long. And those that call him an anarchist will have to explain his popularity. As he himself says, the people are too peaceful to stand anarchy <sup>(1)</sup>. There must be something in Mr. Gandhi's political theories which make them and him so popular. And here we come upon the first point of comment on his creed. Mr. Gandhi's political philosophy is popular. It is popular not because it ministers to the prejudices or tickles the palate of the people, but because it appeals to something in their soul. The negative passive policy of Non-Co-operation is in the line of Hindu tradition. It is the historical Hindu method of constitutional struggle. Mr. Gandhi has himself said "Non-Co-operation is bred in the very marrow of every Indian and if you want to know

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(1) "Young India," Nov. 24, 1921.

## NON-VIOLENT NON-CO-OPERATION 47

why the crores and millions of the masses have responded to the call of Non-Co operation as they have never responded to any other call it is not because I give voice to that call, but because it is born, it is bred in them. It is part of Hinduism" (2). Non-Co-operation is as old as the hills in India. It is the method by which the people of India under Hindu rule have made their grievances known to and redressed by the King. Refusal to pay taxes was not as it is in other political systems, the last of an ascending series of revolts ; it was the normal manner in which the villages of India protested to or petitioned their rulers. Caste was the political and social organisation "par excellence" of ancient India. And the sanction of that association, the thing which kept it together, was boycott. The members of a caste, one of whom had outraged its rules and conventions simply non-co-operated with him. Social ostracism or boycotting was only a form of Non-Co-operation.

The "Satyagraha" fasting and penance with a view to changing the hearts and policies of men with whom you disagree is a practice sanctioned by ancient usage. Sitting *dharna* even unto death before the door of a recalcitrant debtor was frequent among creditors, especially Brahman creditors before the complex machinery of British Justice was introduced into India. Self-immolation and self-sacrifice were means of storing up religious

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(2) "Swaraj in One Year," p. 51—Ganesh and Co.

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merit. Mr. Gandhi has only transferred the idea from the religious to the political sphere. The great secret of the popularity of Mr. Gandhi's political creed and methods is that he has given back to the people their own ideas. He uses methods with which his people have been familiar through the ages. And that is exactly the first point of criticism that suggests itself in regard to the method of Non-Co-operation. It is an antique method. It is too old for modern circumstances. It did very well in the simple society of ancient India. It was a useful instrument of political criticism in a State which consisted only of simple, isolated villages. Non-Co-operation in such a society created disobedience only in one village at a time. The civil disobedience engendered in such conditions was localised and circumscribed. It did not spread from village to village. The spatial as well as the political isolation of villages was so great that the disaffection of a village did not mean the dissolution of the State. Society was also homogeneous in those days. The society of a village was purely rural, the society of a caste consisted only of members of the caste. Non-Co-operation or social boycott could, therefore, be nearly unanimous social action. Ancient social organisations had no alien, religious, racial, or professional elements to reckon with. Social boycott in those days was therefore a force that worked, simply because it was simple, local and

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direct. And let us remember that the reasons for which Non-Co-operation was undertaken in those times were reasons that came home to men's bosoms and businesses. Not matters of high foreign policy, not questions of national prestige, not even matters that affected a province or a community as a whole persuaded the people of ancient or mediæval India to put their civil obedience to a venture. It was wrongs of actual, personal experience that led to such action. Over-assessment of a village by officials deaf to all cries for redress led to refusal of payment of taxes by that village. Persistent misgovernment, or rather want of government as in the Mahomedan period of rule led to villages being abandoned for places less accessible to the harpies of the Sirkar. Offences against some particular rule or convention of a caste led to the boycott of the offending individual. Thus Non-Co-operation was successful in those days because it was made use of in a society that was simple, among a people that was homogeneous and for reasons that were real and immediate.

If, now, we examine the political and social circumstances of modern India, we find that the conditions necessary for the successful use of Non-Co-operation are conspicuous by their absence. Instead of a simple State composed of villages we now have a complex State in which villages and towns are linked by inextricable political and economic bonds. The self-sufficient and self-depen-

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dent village has been brought under the insistent authority of a central government. The governing classes of ancient India are no more in the seats of authority or have been obliged to give room on them to others. The homogeneous population of the villages has been replaced by the mixed population of towns and the larger villages. Hindus, Mahomedans and Christians make up the mostly population not only of towns but of villages. In such a complex society and among such a mixed population Non-Co-operation cannot secure that ready and unanimous acceptance which is necessary for its success. The essential element of Non-Co-operation or boycott is unanimity or almost complete unanimity. Such unanimity was obtainable in the village or caste of ancient India. It is not to be had in the divided society of modern India. But, even so, if the reasons for which Non-Co-operation was to be used were reasons that could appeal to the people, Non-Co-operation might have met with some measure of general success. But the problems which were presented to the people as incentives to Non-Co-operation were as distant to them as the domestic worries of the man in the moon. I am not referring to the truth of the Khilafat wrongs or of the Punjab tragedy in themselves, but of their reality to the rural population of India. I leave out of consideration the Khilafat question as the fate of a foreign State can never drive a people to revolt.

And Hindu-Moslem unity is of such recent origin and such an upper-class movement that it cannot persuade the Hindu masses to put their lives and property in jeopardy. The Punjab tragedy comes nearer home. But in spite of the horrible or childishly cruel character of some of the acts in that gruesome drama can it be said to be reason enough for the common people to rise in revolt? The fact that they have not done so shows that the reason was not real to them. In fact, revolutions are not made that way. Revolutions are not made by an act here and an act there of bloody tyranny. They are caused by a continuous and persistent course of misgovernment. Single and isolated crimes of rulers may set the the match to the powder of revolt, but they can never each by itself make the revolt.

The instrument of Non-Co-operation applied by Mr. Gandhi to the political problems of modern India has broken in his hands because it has been set to tasks for which it was never intended. He has attempted to make it a general movement when, to succeed, it had to be local. A village expedient, he has tried to apply it to urban areas. Non-Co-operation in the form of social boycott was a caste device; he has tried to convert it into a national process. It was as if some modern statesman enamoured of the political models of ancient Greece tried to use the ostracism of the ancient City State in the circumstances of the large, modern, and parliamentary State. Non-Co-operation

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could play only upon the immediate and intimate needs and feelings of a compact population. Mr. Gandhi has attempted, by means of it, to solve the complex and difficult problems of foreign and national policy of a large-scale State. Non-Co-operation is too simple, too straight, too blunt and obvious a weapon to be effective in a numerous, diversified, cross-grained State like that of modern India. Moreover, political devices when they are put to other than their own natural uses not only tend to be useless but proceed to become dangerous. Pure and direct democracy in the large industrial modern State leads to the reign of the Ring and the Boss. Parties not founded on political principles tend to become mere factions. Thus, Non-Co-operation which applied in a village or a caste was successful, not only fails in modern India, but becomes harmful. Non-Co-operation while it localised the spirit of civil disobedience in the village-State spreads it like wild-fire in a State provided with modern means of communication, a newspaper press, and the other devices of modern political propaganda. Mr. Gandhi can never look with equanimity to the spirit of civil disobedience becoming general. That spirit is sooner set free than recalled. It may help to destroy British rule but will it be easy to exorcise it even in the India of Swaraj? The history of the State if it proves anything at all, proves that political virtues take a very long time to be implanted in the characters

of men. Civil obedience, especially, is the result of centuries of political development. To men not used to years of the discipline of government civil obedience is by no means an easy political virtue, Especially, civil obedience of the higher kind, namely, that which is based on a reasoned conviction of the necessity of duties and obligations owed by the citizen to his government as opposed to that which is based upon the fear of the superior physical force of government is, indeed, the hard-won achievement of secular history.

*Magnus ab integro saeculorum nascitur ordo.*

Civil obedience did not begin and will not end with British rule. He who attempts to loosen it is not only attempting to destroy British rule but is undoing the work of all those rulers and sages of ancient India who have built up the fabric of political society.

Again, does not Mr. Gandhi's theory of Non-co-operation rest upon the assumption that governments exist only if their subjects co-operate with them. Now, is that assumption well warranted? Undoubtedly, governments exist only if the people governed obey them. But is not the greater part of that obedience passive and negative? Except the officials engaged in the business of administration, the people of a State are governed rather than help to govern. Provided, they obey the laws and pay the taxes, little else is asked from them to keep a State whole and entire. And laws are generally injunctions not to do



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certain things while refusal to pay taxes is more a positive act of revolt against a government rather than a withdrawal of a continuous support from it. The co-operation that has to be withdrawn in order to pull down a State must be active, positive, continuous, and touch life at a number of points. It is not a true account of political obedience to say that it is co-operation of the people governed with the government. Much of it is passive acquiescence and a negative *laissez faire*. Even under popular systems of government, the people refuse to be governed in a certain way rather than require to be governed in a certain other way. You cannot withdraw an indifference. You cannot refuse an acquiescence with things as they are, and expect the heavens to fall merely as a result of your refusal. Non-Co-operation would succeed if an active and continuous co-operation of the people with government was normal.

Besides the doctrine of Non-Co-operation Mr. Gandhi's main contribution to political theory and practice is the doctrine of "non-violence" in regard to civil resistance. As we have already pointed out, it would not serve the purposes of argument to charge Mr. Gandhi with the violence that has accompanied the numerous "hartals" organised in obedience to the call of Non-Co-operation. Mr. Gandhi's invariable rejoinder has been that the violence of these "hartals" is due to the fact that non-co-operators had not become perfect, that

wherever "hartals" were violent non-co-operators had not observed all the conditions of perfect Non-Co-operation and that if only those conditions were fulfilled. Non-Co-operation could be what it ought to be. To convince Mr. Gandhi of the impossibility of non-violent Non-Co-operation by following his method of argumentation it would be necessary to wait for time prove the worth of his theory. He would always have the advantage of us for he could always say :—The time is not yet. No doubt time proves the truth or falsity of many theories. But time is the logician of history, not of politics. We who have to deal with Mr. Gandhi's politics here and now cannot afford to let time deal with them. Non-Co-operation may or may not be violent in practice. But we might well ask, "Can Non-Co-operation be non-violent even in theory, in the idea?" Behind all the argument of Mr. Gandhi there seems to run the assumption that ideas *qua* ideas, if restricted to the region of ideas, possess no dynamic force? Why should governments prosecute political ideas? Their business is to deal only with events and actions. It is surprising that a man of ideas like Mr. Gandhi should hold ideas in such low esteem. Does not Mr. Gandhi realise that ideas are winged words that carry disaster and death just as they may carry health and benediction to nations and individuals? Was it not an idea that called up the forces that led to the French Revolution? Ideas are active by them-

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selves. The idea of Non-Co-operation can be as active as a mere idea as when translated into action. And activity becomes violence when it meets another activity. Non-Co-operation is necessarily violent because it is an idea and because being an idea it comes into conflict with other ideas opposed to it. To keep Non-co-operation, therefore, in the domain of ideas does not confer upon it any immunity from violence. Non-Co-operation in idea and in intention, is not free from violence. By the very fact that it is held and published by men in a society which has not altogether accepted it, it calls up opposition, and, shall we say, ideal violence. To call a thing an idea does not deprive it of its dynamic force. The spirit of violence, if not acts of violence, are in the very idea of Non-Co-operation.

And, talking about violence, is physical violence, the only kind of violence? The great merit of non-violent non-co-operation, according to Mr. Gandhi, is that it hurts nobody. But is bodily hurt the only kind of hurt that men feel? Cannot a word, a lifting of the eyes, a gesture hurt as much as or even more than a slap in the face. There are forms of moral persuasion, like the caste boycott, which act as a physical force. How Mr. Gandhi, especially in the case of such a sensitive and intellectual people as his own, could forget this simple truth is one of the mysteries that frequently confront the student of Mr. Gandhi's ideas.

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Again, it may be asked, "Can Non-Co-operation as a species of social action be ever non-violent?" Because individuals can practise Non-Co-operation in a non-violent manner does it follow that a combination of such individuals can also practise it in a non-violent manner? Because A, B and C are each of them peaceful, gentle, moral, and responsible human beings, will the activity of A, B and C in combination be necessarily peaceful, gentle and moral? Is there no difference not only in quantity but in quality, between individual and social action? If Mr. Gandhi sees no essential difference between individual and social action, then it must be said he has not understood the psychology of social life and activity. Man in society is not the same as man as an individual. Man's social behaviour is often different from his behaviour as an individual. There is such a thing as crowd conduct or crowd manners. The best of us take our actions from the crowds in which we may be caught up. Gentlemen of England courteous and quiet-mannered in private life may act like dancing dervishes on the floor of the House of Commons. The social atmosphere of the crowd loosens the moral fibre of even its leaders. Individual action may be peaceful action. Social action with great difficulty or under a great stress and for a certain period of time may be kept under an iron discipline, but tends to be followed by wild reaction as in the case of an army. Social action generates a certain amount of friction. It is violent

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in varying degrees. Mr. Gandhi has been caught up in so many crowds that he can realise that the action of a mass of people has necessarily to be violent. Unpopular policemen as well as popular politicians have been mobbed. The incentives and the objects of the mobbing in the two cases are different, but the mobbing is the same. Non-Co-operation in action practised by large masses of people has necessarily to be violent—more or less. Non-violent Non-Co-operation is always an impossibility. It is a contradiction in terms.

The mistake which Mr. Gandhi makes about the peacefulness and passivity of Non-Co-operation proceeds from his philosophy of human nature. Man, according to Mr. Gandhi, is by nature good. He is naturally peaceful. His progress towards the good is rapid, continuous and certain. But is such an optimistic view of human nature true? The sanest view of man is that he is neither an angel nor a beast. And the great drama of human life consists in the battling of man against the bad in him. Human character is not the fine flower of a beautiful sentiment but the hard-won fruit of a painful and prolonged conquest. The making of individual character is spread over years, and that of nations over centuries. There is a law of friction in the moral world as in the physical. The character of man is not a uniform composition. At its best it is in the main a triumph of virtue over many venial faults—of temper, of knowledge, of vision. National progress

has to reckon with the indifference of the common people, the vanity of leaders, and with external relationships. The world of action is not like the world of ideas, free of the laws of motion and friction. Mr. Gandhi like most idealists has made the audacious mistake of trying to annihilate time. But time is of the very essence of progress whether of individuals or of nations. Truth is the daughter of time, said Bacon, and we serve the cause neither of truth nor of progress by ignoring it. Mr. Gandhi thinks that wishing is having. We find this error illustrated in his views on progress, which were quoted in the chapter on fundamental notions. Social Reform, the destruction of untouchability, national unity can be achieved within a year. Of course, he takes care to say that these things are possible only when people shall have been converted to them, that is as soon as they have begun to will these reforms. But his mistake consists in thinking that this conversion, this purification of the will can be done in a year or some other short period of time. It all comes from confounding knowledge with character, a confusion which is as old as moral philosophy. More than once Mr. Gandhi has asserted that the slow progress of his ideas among his people is due to ignorance. Once they were enlightened about the enormity of the Punjab crime or the gravity of the Khilafat wrongs, they would adopt his policy of Non-Co-operation. Once the people of India

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realised the sinfulness of untouchability and the necessity of national unity, they would immediately become one and undivided. But St. Paul should have taught him that between intellectual conviction and moral conversion there is a gulf, passable no doubt, but not always narrow. For the good that we would, we do not, but the evil, which we would not, that we do. If this is true in regard to the making of individual character, it applies with still greater force to the making of national character. On large masses of men, divided by great distances, with various degrees of intellectual and moral capacity, in different stages of economic independence or dependence, ideas take time to work, however great they may be and by howsoever eminent or saintly a man they may be preached. It is this misunderstanding of human nature and of the laws of human progress, which a slight knowledge of history and of things as they are might have corrected, that has brought Mr. Gandhi to the pass of thinking that the progress of India can be achieved independently of the men who are its instruments and of the environment in which they are to achieve it. His mistake is the mistake of the man of ideas who is also a man of good nature. Of him may be said what the Marquis de Segur said of Louis XVI and Necker; "These two, judging men as they ought to be, and not as they are, persuaded themselves too easily that it was enough to wish the good in order to do it and to

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deserve the love of the people in order to obtain it. They did not realise the logic of the passions." It is exactly by ignoring the logic of the passions that Mr. Gandhi has committed the "Himalayan" blunder of believing in the peacefulness of non-violent Non-Co-operation," the success of the economic boycott, and the rapidity of social reform.

Again, Mr. Gandhi does not seem to have realised that progress not only takes time, but that it ought to take time. Ideas and institutions require time to settle down, to strike deep roots, and to be incorporated into the general life of the country in which they are introduced. New ideas and new institutions, whether introduced from foreign countries or recovered from the past of one's own have to be cemented with or built upon ideas and institutions already existing so as to make a strong and enduring edifice in which or through which the people could live their political life. And time must be given for the cement to do its work or for the new and stronger foundations that have to support the old and new structure to settle down. Readjustments and rearrangements may be found necessary and these may have to be spread over years. But political life is much more than an edifice. It is character. It has to be built up by each nation for itself, just as individual character has to be built up by each man for himself, and is not to be got merely from the reading of books or the example of other men. It is an



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experience and each people must go through it without skipping any of its stages. Time must be given for new ideas and institutions to become as integral a part of a people's experience as the old. The help of our fellowmen, the lessons of other people's experiences may make the path of a particular people slightly easier and shorter than that which those who have gone before them have trod. But the fulness of political life can be achieved and enjoyed, only by those that have built the palace of liberty with their own hands, and in the act of doing so have learnt to appreciate its blessings and have obtained the strength to protect its honour.

All this criticism must not be taken to spring from a belief in the divine right of governments to govern as they please. To condemn Mr. Gandhi's brand of civil resistance is not to deny the right of civil resistance. The *jus insurrectionis* is the most potent sanction of constitutional government. It is the *ultima ratio* of political argument. The revolt of the people is the sword that cuts the Gordian knot of a quarrel between intransigent rulers and implacable subjects. But it is the final resort. It must be used when all other instruments of political progress have been tried and have failed to ensure success. And once the sword of revolt has been unsheathed there must be no looking back. Revolution is the Rubicon of political life. Once it is crossed,

we must go on to the bitter end, till the battle is won or lost. Once our feet are set on the path of revolution, there must be no turning back, no counting of the cost, no attempt to justify it except by success. All this ought to come before, not during the process of revolution. It is this truth in regard to revolution that Mr. Gandhi has failed to realise in his progress as a non-co-operator. He has gone backwards and forwards in his policy of civil resistance. He has let "I dare not" wait upon "I would." He has been experimenting in revolution, whereas in revolutions there is no time for experiments. He has been re-hearsing revolution, but in revolutions the stage is set for the one only and final performance. No doubt Mr. Gandhi's various journeyings to and from civil resistance testify to his honesty, to his courage, and to his humanity. He will not have bloodshed and he must have a united people behind him. But he should have seen to these things beforehand. He should have looked before and after before leaping into civil resistance, not during the act of leaping. Mr. Gandhi's tactics as a non-co-operator prove him to be a good man but hardly the leader of a revolution.

## CRITICISM

### II

#### WESTERN CIVILISATION

If Mr. Gandhi's political theories are the product of his views on human nature, his attitude to Western civilisation seems to be due to a wrong reading of the past history and of the present circumstances of Europe. In his diatribe against the civilisation of the West Mr. Gandhi seems to have followed the popular fashion of giving a dog a bad name in order to hang it. He calls Western civilisation materialistic and curses it with bell, book, and candle. But is Western civilisation materialistic, and nothing besides? That material progress is one of the most important elements of western civilisation goes without saying. But are there no moral or religious forces in Europe just as potent as, to put it at the lowest, any working in India? To judge from Mr. Gandhi's account of Western civilisation, as it is found in his book "*Hind Swaraj*," quotations from which were made in an earlier chapter, he seems to have seen nothing but machines and slums in Europe. For him the people of Europe seem to be living in the streets or in restaurants. Their daily occupa-

tion is war and the slaughter of animals. Is this a true account of Western civilisation? Of course Mr. Gandhi allows that there are good men and women in Europe. But the civilisation is rotten to the core. But, even so, is it a true estimate?

Is not Mr. Gandhi judging Western civilisation by certain external, temporary, local manifestations? Are the factory and the slum an essential and permanent feature of western civilisation? Are not attempts being made even now to grapple with the evils of industrialism? Man must be judged not by the evil that exists, but by the efforts he makes to reduce and remove it. Were the factory and the slum the only institutions that Mr. Gandhi saw in Europe? Had the church steeples of rural England no meaning for him? Does he think that vulgar plutocrats and roué aristocrats are the representatives of western civilisation? For a hundred, nomadic, dechristianised vulgarians who flaunt their riches and their vices in London there are a million honest folk who live the normal, moral family life of the Christian. Has not Mr. Gandhi travelled on the continent of Europe and seen a Catholic peasantry at work and at play and at Mass and how morality and material progress can be combined without detriment to either? And even in towns, the hospitals, the sisters of mercy, the university settlements, the cathedrals,—are they the product of a materialistic civilisation? The fact is, Mr. Gandhi's account of western civilisation

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is one-sided, incomplete and therefore inaccurate. Although he has travelled in Europe, he has seen only a little and seen that little wrong. We are almost led to suspect that his account of western civilisation is secondary and derivative. There is some ground for this suspicion. As an appendix to his book "*Hind-Swaraj*" Mr. Gandhi gives a list of books for the further reading of the young Indian whom he had in view when he wrote it. They are mainly the writings of men profoundly disgusted with the evils of the material part of modern civilisation in the West. Here are some of them : "Civilisation—Its Cause and Cure" by Carpenter; "The Fallacy of Speed" by Taylor; "The White Slaves of England" by Sheppard; "The Paradoxes of Civilisation" by Max Nordau; "Unto This Last" and "A Joy for Ever" by Ruskin. Mr. Gandhi has evidently taken his account of western civilisation from these works. It is not strange that he has gone wrong believing these indictments to be true accounts of the civilisation of Europe. These men did not denounce western civilisation but some of its modern manifestations. To take their fulminations as a true picture of Western civilisation is to do them an injustice. It is as if you estimated the moral character of a man from a confession of his sins. It is to take the prosecution story in a criminal charge for the judgment. To assert that, because Ruskin did not like machinery and the smoke of factories, he denounced

western civilisation is to be unfair to Ruskin, the lover and interpreter of the pictures, the cathedrals, and the family life of Europe. To take western civilisation at the estimate which some of its children make of it is not only a piece of bad criticism but an act of self-delusion which will not help the cause of one's own civilisation.

This mistaken judgment of western civilisation would be only a curiosity of criticism if it did not influence some of Mr. Gandhi's views on the ways and means of progress in India. Mr. Gandhi wants India to eschew large-scale and mechanical industry. India's chief industry is agriculture and all its industry must be rural. Back to the land and back to the Charka is the burden of his economic teaching. He preaches it in the best interests of agriculture. He thinks the best way of promoting the agriculture of the country is to make it the only great industry. To students of history and economics this must appear to be the surest way of killing the agriculture of a country. The history of European countries like England, France and Russia shows that agricultural prosperity depends on the growth of industry and commerce. All the improvements in the methods of cultivation, improvement of the soil and in cattle-breeding that distinguished the history of English agriculture in the nineteenth century were due to the development of industry and commerce illustrated by the growth of large cities like Manchester, Birmingham, Liverpool, Leeds and others. The

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agriculture of Scotland was poor and scanty till the rise of great industrial centres like Glasgow, Dundee and Paisley. Eighteenth century France saw its agriculture impoverished by the restraints on the freedom of commerce within the country. Russia like India is a country of villages and few towns, of little industry beside agriculture, and the agricultural production of Russia is poor when compared to that of other countries like the U. S. A. which are also industrial.

The reason for this economic phenomenon, the close dependence of the prosperity of agriculture upon that of industry and commerce, is simple. The prosperity of agriculture depends mainly on two things—demand and capital. The growth of an urban population increases the demand for agricultural products. Industries also produce the capital that could be applied to agriculture. Agricultural prosperity grows with industrial prosperity. It is bad history and bad economics to look upon agriculture and industry as the enemies of each other. Mr. Gandhi has near his own home proof of the truth of the economic doctrine which he by implication disputes. Guzarat, the garden, or as it should be called the vegetable garden of Western India has been noted for its agricultural production for centuries. But Guzarat has also possessed from almost the beginning of the Christian era, great commercial and industrial cities like Broach, Surat and Ahmedabad. The indus-

trial development of India is necessary in the interests of agriculture. Far from being a call to health and progress, the cry "back to the land" spells disaster to the agriculture of India. One of the two great causes of Indian poverty is the excessive fragmentation of land on account of the Hindu law of inheritance, causing excessive pressure of population upon the soil. The land in India has to feed more mouths than it can support, Malthusians would place restrictions upon the growth of population. But that is a counsel of despair when it is not a counsel of cowardice.

A more courageous policy is to divert population from the soil. The townward movement inaugurated by the establishment of large-scale industries is a great blessing to India's agriculture. The greater demand for goods, the multiplication of markets, and the increase of capital through industries are bound to stimulate agricultural production. The Charka movement, although it may appear to be of immediate benefit to the agricultural population, is only a penny-wise pound-foolish device. It will strengthen that tendency to the exhaustion of the soil which has been going on for some time. The soil in India has been cultivated continuously for long centuries for it has been throughout the ages the chief source of the wealth of the country. The land has been the milch-cow of Indian wealth. It has been almost sucked dry. A petty, lacerating, exhausting system of exploita-



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tion has been applied to it. The lack of capital has prevented the less productive parts of the country from being exploited. A primitive system of inheritance has led to that excessive fragmentation of the soil which is one of the major curses of the country. The result is the existence of those innumerable little plots of agricultural land, looking like so many prison-houses in which the spirit of agriculture is enchained, with their petty, paltry, pricking system of exploitation, that did very well when a small and scattered population had to be fed but which has become a terrible strain now that one-third of the population of Asia has to be supported by it. If Indian agriculture is to advance it must be set free from the pressure of a population it cannot bear. Any system which has the effect of turning away the population from land must be a boon to agriculture. The capitalistic, large-scale industries of the modern cities of India serve this useful purpose. And a friend of Indian agriculture like Mr. Gandhi instead of cursing them ought to bless them. Of course, there are evils and drawbacks accompanying the factory system. But the lessons of the industrial history of the West are not valueless for the rest of the world. Because a certain good has been attended by much abuse it does not follow that we must eschew the good in order to avoid the evil. The evils of the industrial system are avoidable evils and human statesmanship is not so bankrupt as to run away from them

After the opposition to machinery and factory industry, the opposition to the English language is the consequence of Mr. Gandhi's hatred of western civilisation that has the most important bearing on the progress of India. Mr. Gandhi has said many harsh things of the English language. Even if we do not take all his denunciation "au pied de la lettre," there still remains enough for us to believe that Mr. Gandhi looks upon the English language as one of the chief causes of the political and intellectual decadence of India. The vernaculars of India are in their present position on account of the cultivation of English. The absence of intellectual and scientific enterprise is due to the English language. In this matter of the English language also, Mr. Gandhi's views are belied by history and experience. The cultivation of a foreign language has never been the greatest evil that can befall a nation. On the contrary the study of foreign languages and literatures has been one of the most powerful sources of the progress of a country. The study of the classics of Greece and Rome has been for centuries the staple of the training of the European intellect. English literature was stimulated into efflorescence by the study of French and Italian. In this country, the modern development of Bengali shows that an Indian vernacular has nothing to fear from the study of English. On the contrary the Indian vernaculars may acquire a directness, a simplicity, a modernity from the study of English by those

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who write in them. But, says Mr. Gandhi, the Indian intellect has been emasculated by the laborious methods of learning English. This is only an argument against the methods of teaching English that obtain in this country. It is not an argument for the boycott of the language. An original intellect is not paralysed by the study of a language, however difficult it may be. Till recently scientific and philosophical treatises were written in Europe in Latin. But that did not detract from the originality of the scientists and the philosophers of Europe. The fact is, the present crusade against English in India is only a part of that false nationalism which plays into the hands of reaction. We should have a common language for India if India is to be a nation. But, this language, it is argued, should be a native language. It should be Hindi or Urdu. But Hindi or Urdu is as foreign as or rather much more foreign than English to large masses of the population in the south of India. Why should not English become the common political language of India? The vernaculars have lost their chance of becoming the intellectual and political bond of union of the people of India. Each of the conquerors of India had their chance of making their language the language of the country. The Aryans endeavoured to make Sanskrit the language of India and split themselves into numerous States and their language into numerous dialects. The Mahomedans all but succeeded in making Urdu the one language

of this country. Urdu lost its chance of becoming the national language of India when Mahomedan rule was stayed from extending over the whole of the peninsula. Mr. Gandhi however thinks that he can make Urdu the common language of India. He has sent out peripatetic teachers and has organised private classes for the teaching of Urdu in the south. But that is not how things happen. The political atmosphere, material motives or national emotions determine that one language shall be the common language of a country to the exclusion of others. None of these causes operates in favour of Urdu in modern India. History has decided against any of the vernaculars becoming the national language of India and we would be wise to abide by its decision.

The present-day campaign against the English language would therefore seem to be based on mere prejudice. One of two things—either India shall be one or it shall be many? We have to make our choice between the two policies. If we want India to be one, English must continue to occupy a position of preeminence in the educational and public life of the country. We may on the other hand desire to recover the ancient idea of linguistic provinces, but we must also be prepared to restore India to its ancient condition when the north-west frontier and the sea-board could not be well defended and India was the victim

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of any swashbuckling nation that came along. And since when, it may be asked, have Indians begun to be afraid of foreign languages. Urdu was the language of foreign conquerors who camped in India, and the Indians of that day had no scruple in learning it. It was Indians like Ram Mohan Roy that encouraged the learning of English long before Macaulay wrote his famous minute. It is attributing too much to a language to say that one loses one's soul by speaking it. The French Canadians have not lost their soul because English is the official language of the Dominion of Canada. Nor have the Irish lost their hearts to England because they speak the English language. We must take facts as they are and shape our policy accordingly. If India is to be one, English is the only possible common language. If India is to play a part in the commerce and intercourse of nations, her people must become possessed of the language of commerce and intercourse especially in the East. It is some such feeling as this that prompts Mr. Gandhi to restrict the study of English to a select few. "For a few of us," he says (3) "a knowledge of English is necessary. They can carry on the departments of national commerce and international diplomacy and give to the nation the best of western literature, thought and science. That would be the legitimate use of English.\* But would not that be a piece of intellectual snobbery? If

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(3) Young India, Feb. 2. 1921.

knowledge of English is power, should it not be possessed by the masses? Otherwise, India would be governed by a few people who through their knowledge of English would command the sources of power. A new kind of oligarchical rule would be introduced in the country. What is this but the ancient principle of entrusting the government to these learned in certain esoteric branches of knowledge? Formerly education in the Vedas and the Shastras was the passport to authority. Then the key to aristocratic empire was Sanskrit, now it is to be English. How Mr. Gandhi who believes in the people and in government by the people can have arrived at such an aristocratic principle of rule passes one's understanding. It is only an example of the logical absurdities one falls into when one nurses a merely emotional hatred.

Mr. Gandhi's hatred of Western civilisation is all the more distressing because there are certain principles of western civilisation which Mr. Gandhi would introduce into India. The principles of liberty and equality are two such principles. Mr. Gandhi has written some fine things about freedom and individual liberty. He has defined Swarāj as freedom for everyone, the smallest among us, to do as he likes without any physical interference with his liberty. Speaking about the reform of the drink evil through compulsion he said: "I would rather have India free than sober, if freedom has to be sold

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to buy sobriety" 4. Mr. Gandhi is a social reformer. He has inveighed against the iniquities of caste. He has delivered a terrible indictment against some of the social institutions of Hinduism. The position of the so-called depressed classes in Hindu society has roused his ire. Untouchability, he regards, as the greatest blot on Hinduism 5. We must treat the pariahs, he urges, as our blood brothers as they are in fact. We must return to them the inheritance of which we have robbed them 6. Mr. Gandhi is not one of those complacent social reformers that would follow the line of least resistance and let social reform wait upon political change. With that wonderful instinct of his, which sometimes unerringly hits the heart of things, he has declared that social reform must precede political reform. The removal of untouchability is a reform not to follow Swaraj but to precede it 7. There are Augean stables enough and to spare for us to clean in Indian society 8. But together with all this "*saeva indignatio*" against the evils of the Hindu social system there runs the naive belief in the rapidity of human progress. The hoary sin of untouchability must be removed in a year. "We must aim," he says, "at bringing this about within this year of grace, probation, preparation and 'tapasya,' that is 1921."

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(4) "Young India," Feb, 23, 1922.

(5) Ibid, April 27, 1921.

(6) Ibid, Jan, 19, 1921,

(7) Ibid, Jan, 19, 1921.

(8) Ibid, April 27, 1921.

Is it remarkable that the wrong of untouchability has not yet been removed although the sands of the year of grace have long run out? It is not merely that progress takes time, but there is another reason for Mr. Gandhi's failure to achieve social reform, which explains why I called Mr. Gandhi's hatred of Western civilisation distressing. It is this: Institutions can be replaced only by institutions. You cannot fight an institution with an idea, however great and sublime it may be. The idea of untouchability is embodied in an institution which is caste. If you want to destroy untouchability you must attack the institution of Caste. If you want to establish the ideas of liberty and equality you must introduce institutions embodying those ideas. An idea will be a mere idea, it will remain in the air without any influence over the conduct of men till it is caught and given form and shape in an institution. That is the teaching of history. The Roman institution of slavery was destroyed not by the mere enunciation of the Christian ideas of freedom and equality but by the formation of free associations of men in feudal society and in the guilds of the middle ages. The principle of equality did not triumph in France with the Declaration of the Rights of men but with their embodiment in the institutions and laws of the Napoleonic Code. If the idea of equality is to triumph over the idea of inequality or its extreme Indian manifestation known as untouchability



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it must be introduced into India in the form of an institution. Caste is an institution based upon the ineluctable decision of birth, upon restraint, and upon the idea of permanence. If we want the opposite ideas of the free choice of free men, of liberty, self-government, and equality to be brought into India, we must open the door to institutions embodying those ideas. Ideas must be put into institutions before they can strike root and grow. Ideas must be lived before they can become part of our innermost convictions. And they can be lived only in institutions, which are the nursery, the "campus," the training ground of ideas. Mr. Gandhi wants untouchability to go, but Caste to remain. That is to say he wants to defeat the enemy by leaving him his stronghold. Mr. Gandhi would like the ideas of equality, of freedom, of self-government to take root in the country. But he will not allow the institutions of western civilisation embodying those ideas and the result of those ideas, as parliaments, free industry, the free family free social unions displacing caste and the like to enter the country. Mr. Gandhi's crusade against Western civilisation is therefore directed against those very ideas of liberty and equality which are so dear to him.

In this matter of western civilisation as in the stuff of his political creed, Mr. Gandhi's attitude marks a return to the traditional thought of Hindu India. The ancient civilisation of India was exclu-

sive and self-sufficient. The State, of ancient India built upon a pantheistic philosophy of life was permanent and stationary. New ideas from abroad were feared because they might disturb the peaceful placidity of a stationary State. That is why foreign travel was tabooed. That is why in so many departments of life Indian civilisation is what it was in the days when the Aryans settled in Madhyadesa about ten centuries before Christ. Many great and fruitful ideas have been born in India but have been stunted in their infancy. National unity, self-government, the arts and sciences have reached a certain stage of development and stopped there. A civilisation remains wholly and purely itself at the peril of dying a slow death. Freedom is wanted for the growth of a civilisation as for the growth of men. Western civilisation has been vigorous because it contains elements which are the spoils of alien civilisations. Europe in the Middle Ages was willing to be taught by the Arabs. That which, says Montesquieu, has helped to make the Romans the masters of the world, is that, having fought successfully all peoples, they have always given up their own usages as soon as they found something better. Free trade in civilisation is necessary for the growth of civilisation. It is only primitive or stationary civilisations that fence themselves round with Chinese walls of separation. A great civilisation and fear of others go ill together. But Mr. Gandhi's hatred of western civilisation is thorough-

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ly and traditionally Hindu. That is another reason for his great popularity. He is the standard-bearer of the ancient civilisation of India. His is the banner round which rally the forces that call back India to her past. Ever since the coming of the British there has been going on in this country a battle of civilisations. The struggle is between the India of the past and the India of the future, between a civilisation that would be purely Indian and a civilisation, Indian, no doubt, but open and sensitive to the influences of foreign civilisations, between a purely rural India and an India in which the agriculture of villages and the industry of large towns shall grow with and help each other, between the simple village State of ancient India and the complex modern State of towns, parliaments, and international relationships, between the quiet, restful, stationary life of other days and the changeful, free and progressive life of modern times. In this great battle of ideas and institutions Mr. Gandhi is the protagonist of the past.

## AN ESTIMATE

"We shall not refute Christianity, we shall explain it," declared the agnostics of the Victorian age in England, meaning by explaining it explaining it away. The history of human thought and action, however, shows that we cannot dispose of powerful ideas or institutions in this easy, summary fashion. Even error captures the minds and hearts of men provided it plays upon their feelings, and answers their primal desires. The theories of Social Contract, Communism, and of Caste although as theories they may be riddled by historical and logical criticism, have held the allegiance of men, because they have seemed to offer a way out of intolerable wrong or misery. Error, although it may cease to be, has its day. And Shakespeare has taught us to look for some soul of goodness in things evil. In fact, error lives by the good it carries with it. It is, therefore, only sound criticism to separate the good from the evil in any doctrine of error and to explain the hold of error upon the intelligences of men. The popularity of error is not to be explained by mere wilfulness or ignorance. There is a strain of sanity in the common people, which acting as a force of self-preservation, guards them against devastating errors. The mass of men are protected against the attractions of wild, universal

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theories by their instincts. If knowledge and enlightenment were the price to be paid for the preservation of society, it would have crumpled up times without number. But if in spite of the instinct of self-preservation men do swear fealty to false doctrine, it is either because of wrongs from which they must escape even by catching at the straw of error, or because there is in the error some saving salt of truth.

It would be an unfair account of the criticism to which Mr. Gandhi's ideas have been subjected in the preceding pages to conclude that there is nothing 'new and nothing true in all that Mr. Gandhi has said and done. Such cheap cynicism will not serve the ends of truth. One need not be a democrat to be convinced that there must be something in a view that is held in honour by large numbers of men. One reason for the popularity of Mr. Gandhi's theories we have already found in their agreement with the political traditions of the people. But there are some ideas of his which deserve to be popular. And here we come to the credit side of Mr. Gandhi's account. In the first place, his revolt against Government is to a large extent a revolt against over-government. The positive and fruitful side of Non-Co-operation is its insistence on self-help. Although this self-help takes such crude forms as the attempt to clothe India with the charka and to educate India by means only of private schools, the

spirit behind these crude devices is praiseworthy. Mr. Gandhi has done a great service to India by preaching the worth of private effort and initiative in the promotion of national progress. There was need for the teaching of the doctrine of individualism, when Mr Gandhi preached it. India was wallowing in the stagnant pool of State socialism. The various schools of political thought in the country Nationalists, Moderates, South Indian Liberals held in common the belief that the State, if not the only, was the chief begetter of social progress. Everything was to be done for the people by the State. Why is India so illiterate? Because the State in India has not done enough towards the education of the people, was the answer. Why is India so industrially backward? It is because the State has not promoted industrial development. Why is India so poor? Again, because the State does not actively promote the prosperity of the people. Bureaucracy or government by a number of bureaus or departments and an army of officials and clerks is the instrument of government of State Socialism. Far from having been introduced by the British, it is the historical form of Indian Government. We find it in existence as early as the times of Kautilya, and it has persisted through the changes of centuries. The indigenous form of government is a "ma bap" government. Not for nothing is government called the *sarkar* in India. It is against this theory of State Socia-

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lism, of "Etatisme" as the French call it, one of the most fashionable, as it is one of the most desolating theories of modern times, that Mr. Gandhi, in preaching his doctrine of self-help to the people, proceeds. Education must not be wholly in the hands of the State. Private initiative is the source of industrial prosperity. The lust for litigation is a deadly obstacle to the prosperity of India. These are some of the fruitful ideas that issue from Mr. Gandhi's doctrine of non-co-operation with the British Government. It is a pity that this gospel of self-help and self-reliance should be preached in the interests of reaction. It is a pity that the national education which Mr. Gandhi would organise has little that is national (in the modern connotation of the word) and less that is progressive in it, but is a distinct reversion to the system of the village civilisation of ancient India. It is a pity that the only industrial system that Mr. Gandhi would establish in the country is the simple cottage industry of ancient days, which did very well when the country was peopled by a few millions but which would be ridiculously inadequate to provide for the needs of the 300 millions of modern India. Mr. Gandhi's crusade against the national pastime of litigation is worthy of applause. But it is by a reform of the Hindu law and of Anglo-Indian procedure that he can reduce it, not by preaching a boycott of courts of justice. It is

indeed a national misfortune that Mr. Gandhi should preach self-reliance to his people for the ends of reaction. But none the less it is a very salutary political lesson that he has taught his people—that they should look to themselves, in the main, not to States and governments, for their prosperity, that individual initiative and effort are the parents of national progress, that not an impersonal system of government but particular persons or bodies of persons are generally the cause of a nation's ills. This lesson, as has been pointed out already, had need to be preached at the time Mr. Gandhi preached it. Indian politicians were drifting into the lazy mood of blaming the government for all the ills that India was heir to. Famine, plague, industrial backwardness illiteracy, not to speak of minor evils, were all due to the sins of omission and commission of the alien British government. And the panacea for all these evils was a change of government. Only change the form of government, convert the British into an Indian bureaucracy, transfer power from the Indian Civil Service to the representatives of the people duly elected, and we shall have social reforms, industrial progress, an educated and prosperous people. To this doctrine of complacent irresponsibility Mr. Gandhi has opposed the doctrine, that the people are themselves responsible for their political and social condition. Not government but the people themselves are the authors of their



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welfare. To leaders and people bemused by theories of State Socialism Mr. Gandhi preached the saving doctrine of self-reliance. And after all the chaff of Non-co-operation shall have been fanned away by experience, this grain of political truth which lay in it will remain. Mr. Gandhi by preaching the gospel of self-help to his people has rendered a lasting political service to his country.

In another matter besides the device of making government the scapegoat for all the misfortunes of India, Mr. Gandhi has clashed with the politicians whom he has displaced in popular esteem. There is another political bubble blown off with some satisfaction by the Congress politicians of the day before yesterday which Mr. Gandhi has pricked. This was a theory in regard to the relations between political and social reform. The theory was that, the State being in the main, the author of social progress, once political reform was secured in India, social reform would follow immediately and certainly. Nationalise the government, and we can legislate the people into social progress. Caste, infant marriages, enforced widowhood can be legislated out of existence by national and popular governments. Social reform is possible only under self-government. It is useless to talk about or to work for social reform when full legislative power is not in our hands. It would be a mere beating of the air, it would be only knocking our heads against a wall. Let us follow the line of

least resistance, that is let us work for political reforms. Once we have captured the fortress of political authority, the citadel of social reaction will yield at the first call to surrender. So argued the Congress politicians till the other day, and so also argue even now some of those who do not bow the knee to Mr. Gandhi. But the fundamental fallacy of such an argument could not long escape the fire of Mr. Gandhi's logic. He will not let social reform wait upon political reform. The foundations of a self-governing State must first be laid before the superstructure of self-government can be reared. National unity, social solidarity, religious or philosophic agreement must come before India can realise political freedom. Untouchability must go before India claims to enter the comity of self-governing nations. Laws do not make a people. Laws are made by the people. You cannot legislate a people into social progress. National unity cannot be secured by legislation. Social reform is outside the province of governments and legislatures—even national governments and legislatures. The people cannot be made moral or progressive by Acts of Parliament. So runs his dialectic against the men who would postpone the social regeneration of India till political emancipation shall have been reached.

Who that has learnt how States and nations are made can deny that by preaching the priority of social to political reform Mr. Gandhi has seized people in India of the fundamental principles govern-

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ing the birth and progress of States. The politicians who think that social reform can be effected by legislation argue on the analogy of modern practice in Europe and America. But the analogy is false as the kinds of social reform wanted in India and in Europe are fundamentally different. Social reform in Europe has to do with the mistakes committed or allowed to be committed by the legislature in former times. The Housing Problem, the Factory Question, Popular Education, the condition of the Working Classes—these are problems that have arisen out of the negligence and lack of foresight of governments. They have nothing to do with the foundations of States. The defects which they connote are the evil excrescences of a fully grown though lop-sided State. But social reform in India has to do with the foundations of the State. The abolition of Caste is necessary for national unity, without which no self-governing nation can come into existence. Custom must be dethroned from its present bad eminence if freedom is to be the law of our being in India. Religious equality and tolerance must be universally accepted before all the people of India can settle down into a common nationhood. But Caste cannot be abolished, social freedom and intellectual unity cannot be established by acts of legislation. It was not a legislature that brought the evils of Hindu society into existence, and it is not a legislature that will abolish them. Hindu society came into being

outside legislatures and independently of governments. Its improvement, therefore, cannot be expected from either of these. Hindu society must reform itself or it must perish—that is the great social gospel of Mr. Gandhi. By placing social reform before political reform, by bringing out the proper relations between the two, by giving to each the place and weight due to it in the scheme of public activity in India, Mr. Gandhi has rendered the second of his great political services to the country.

In rendering such service to India Mr. Gandhi has conferred on Indian politics a sense of reality. Till Mr. Gandhi took up politics in earnest, Indian politics seemed to be a rechauffe of the stale maxims and frayed theories of English politics. Indian politicians argued according to Bentham, Mill or Morley. The leaders of political thought and action a decade ago were bred on the books and speeches of English Liberalism. The Congress speeches of Mr. Gokhale or of Sir Pherozeshah Mehta might have been delivered in the National Liberal Club. Mr. Gandhi has changed all that. He has awakened Indian politics to the realities of the Indian situation. He has driven people to the truth that the salvation of India lies in the hands of the people of India. Appeals to the Government of India or the English Parliament—except the impossible demand to deliver up the keys of the fortress—are conspicuous by their absence in the

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speeches and writings of Mr. Gandhi. Not to government but to the people are his speeches and writings addressed. One of the outstanding results of Mr. Gandhi's political activity, as I have pointed out already, is that he has made politics popular in India. He has brought politics from the Congress platforms to the beach and the maidan. He has interested the common people, the masses, in politics, that is in matters concerning national well-being. This in itself is a great achievement. For, the misfortune in India has been not that people have taken up the wrong brand of politics but that they have not taken to politics at all.

Political passivity has been the note running through the life of the rural masses. Indifference to national concerns, in fact to any concern outside the range of the village and its fields has been the characteristic of the political life of the people of India. It is something to have awakened such a people to thinking about their country as a whole and about its problems as their own. To have made the dumb, passive millions of rural India political is not the least of Mr. Gandhi's achievements. It is not to the point to complain that Mr. Gandhi in making the rural millions think on politics, has made them think wrong. The point is that he has induced them to think at all. It is sufficient answer to the charge to say that people first beginning to think generally do think wrong. And again, if Mr. Gandhi makes the masses think

wrong on politics, it rests with those who are opposed to Mr. Gandhi and his philosophy to organise propaganda in the interests of their view and to compete with him for popular acceptance. However that may be, all those who believe in government by the people, who hold that India, if it advances at all, must advance as a whole, and that there must be no intellectual or political opposition between the classes and the masses will thank Mr. Gandhi for inducing the masses of India to be interested in politics.

Mr. Gandhi has not only made politics popular, he has also made it serious. Early in his career in India, he had declared that he wanted to spiritualise politics. If he intended by this to give politics the power and the certainty of religion it is to be hoped that he will fail. For, the Puritan or Calvinistic experiments at government have shown what a curse politics in the garb of religion can be. But if by spiritualising politics Mr. Gandhi meant importing consistency, dignity, and conscience into politics, he must be called a benefactor of his country. Mr. Gandhi, in fact, has rendered such a service to Indian politics. He has shown by his own example that a politician must suffer for his views. He has shown that even a politician must have a conscience. He has wedded politics to morality. He has cured nationalist young India of the cult of the bomb. Although his idea of abolishing war or physical force in the ordering of human

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affairs will prove to be a dream, yet there is this element of truth in the gospel of non-violence which not only peoples but governments would do well to lay to heart—namely, that the ways of human progress and government ought in the main to be the ways of peace. He has dignified Indian politics by showing that it does not consist merely in a feminine nagging at the government. In his discussions he has gone down to the foundations of political problems. He has realised and made people realise that politics in India means not perpetual opposition to an alien government, but that it also means setting India's own house in order. Mr. Gandhi found Indian politics in the slough of party opportunism; he has raised it to be the science of Indian welfare.

Now that we have reviewed all that could be said in favour of and against Mr. Gandhi's political philosophy and methods, what are we to think of it all? Does his philosophy hold health or does it spell darkness for the country? Are his political methods tuned to the conditions of modern India and can they serve the purposes to which they are put? An attempt has been made to answer these questions in the course of the criticism to which Mr. Gandhi's philosophy and methods have been treated. I have tried to separate the grain from the chaff. Much has been found to praise, much also to condemn in his thought and in his action. We

have seen how he has grasped some of the fundamental principles of political science. But the melancholy conclusion of all our review of Mr. Gandhi's work is that he has put his character, the tremendous influence he wields over his people and the political truths which he has seized hold of to the service of reaction. Even in the preaching of truth he has the interests of outworn ideas and institutions at heart. Although his tongue has been touched by the fire of prophecy he mouths the shibboleths and incantations of the past.

Mr. Gandhi is a popular Isaiah. He preaches self-help to his people but, he does it in order to revive the monopoly of "charka," and of Caste and of Non-Co-operation. He wants to bring back the village civilisation of ancient India. It is not for nothing that although a barrister of England Mr. Gandhi described himself at his recent trial in Ahmedabad as "farmer and weaver." All his political activity has been directed to the revival of the ancient "farmer and weaver" civilisation of India, Mr. Gandhi will give pride of place to social reform but he will not abolish Caste. He will do away with the sin of untouchability ; but he does not realise that untouchability is only a symptom, an extreme manifestation of the disease that is Caste. He knows that the social foundations of a self-governing and self-reliant State have yet to be laid in India. And yet he exhausts himself in attempting to alter the superstructure.



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He would have national unity, prosperity and virility and yet he will attack those very institutions and ideas of western civilisation which may obtain what an isolated and self-satisfied India has not been able to obtain through the centuries. Mr. Gandhi will use the instruments of freedom—self-help, individual initiative, free associations—to buttress up reaction.

What might Mr. Gandhi have not achieved for his country if he had used his gifts in the cause of progress? What lasting benefit might he not have conferred upon India if he had put his saintly character, his intellectual sincerity, his unique social influence to the service of the present and the future of his country? What might he not have done to lay the foundations of a free and self-governing India? These foundations he has the wisdom to realise are mainly social. Mr. Gandhi is out to destroy British rule. But granting it were practicable, is it an end worthy of his stout heart and fearless mind? British rule in India is a pigmy compared to such a giant of evil as Caste. British rule is an evil (if it is an evil) of yesterday compared to that hoary evil genius of the country—Custom. In attacking British rule, is not Mr. Gandhi mistaking the symptom for the disease? It is Caste and Custom and the philosophy of passivity and the spirit of isolation and self-sufficiency that have brought not one stranger but a procession of strangers within the gates of India. Mr. Gandhi's politi-

cal career, alas ! bears the marks of wasted effort and ill-used opportunity. It leaves us wondering what mischievous imp presides over the destinies of India and makes it the home of futile disloyalties and of causes that deserves to be lost. Mr. Gandhi might have been the saviour of India, he is content to be the saviour of Hinduism. He might have been a second Buddha leading his people to social freedom, as that other led them to religious freedom. But he is content to be a second Tilak. He might have been Jack the Giant killer; he is content to be a journeyman politician. He might have lived for his country, he has been willing to waste his days in prison, like any common place law-breaker. He might have saved his country, he is anxious only to save his theories. With regret and with despondency,—for this seems to be the fate of almost all the great men that have been given to India—we must set Mr. Gandhi down as one of the great Might-Have-Beens of Indian history.

## A WORD IN CONCLUSION

To end this slight essay of political criticism on a note of practical conclusion I can only repeat the old political maxim that, apart from and even better than intellectual refutation, such as has been attempted here, the most effective way of combating false revolutionary theories is to remove the causes of popular discontent. Revolutionary theories grow best on the soil of profound poverty. Economic burdens are the causes that predispose a people to give ear to theories of revolution. Rousseau's Essay on "Inequality" would have remained a prize essay if the hopeless poverty and grinding tyranny of the Ancient Regime in France had not driven the French to the counsel of despair that any State, even one founded on error and reared in bloodshed, would be better than the one under which they had been existing. Bolshevism has been successful in Russia because of the hunger of the Russian peasantry for property in land, and is secure to the extent to which individual proprietorship of land is allowed to exist. Mr. Gandhi's philosophy of revolution has been so readily accepted because of the poverty of the people, the rise in prices, and the increasing burden of taxation. A statesman confronted by the success of Non-cooperation should set about removing the causes of economic discontent. Revolutions are made by the

dearth of food rather than by the intellectual excellence of theories of revolution.

"Give me sound politics and I will give you sound finance," runs a French political maxim. With much greater truth, it may be said, sound finance makes a stable State. Most States that have gone down have foundered on the rock of bad finance. If the wind is to be taken out of Non-Cooperation, the finances of India must forthwith be restored to a condition of soundness. They are in a very unsound condition at present. The Indian Civil Service is not a good training ground for Ministers of Finance. For one thing they learn in the Service to spend royally the country's money—fairly and honestly no doubt, but royally. An English official trained in the strict traditions of the Treasury should be immediately \* imported as on former occasions, when the two Wilsons were imported to put the finances of India in order. The cost of government must be considerably reduced. A wasteful system of government has been inherited from the Mughals. It must be reformed to suit the rules of modern economy. Measures must be taken to improve the production of the country. This can be done not by attempting to create industries through industrial Ministries and Departments—no free State can create industries—but by establishing circumstances and conditions favourable to the production of wealth. Security of life and

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\* This was written in May, 1922.

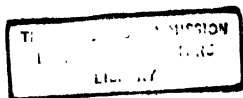
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property, improved communications—the road system of India is woefully defective and much of the money spent on the promotion of industry and agriculture by the state might more profitably be spent on the opening out of new roads and other communications where they are needed—the removal of all obstacles to the freedom of trade and industry within the country—these things should be attended to by the government if it wants to serve the cause of economic progress. Legislation should be undertaken to stem the fragmentation of land which is one of the economic plagues of the country.

Lastly, if the revivalism of Mr. Gandhi is to be combated, if India is not to begin its history all over again, the salutary influences of the civilisation of Europe must be allowed to continue to play upon the native civilisation of India. Of late it would seem as if Englishmen had lost faith in themselves and in their civilisation. Mr. Gandhi's tirade against Western civilisation seems to have played greater havoc among Englishmen than among Indians. Some of the former have begun to think that the civilisation of India had best been left to itself, that it was a mistake to have made English the language of government and of education, and to have introduced the political institutions of the West into the country. It would be best, such people proclaim, for England in the future to restrict itself to the duties of defending the coasts and the

frontier and leave the people to their own devices in government and civilisation. If such a feeling should become general among Englishmen, it would mean that the time had arrived for England to abandon India. The only justification for British rule in India is that it has brought to the country things which India could not create itself. The ideas and institutions of the West that British Rule has acclimatised in the country have served to supplement or, in the interests of progress, to supplant the ideas and institutions of India. Far from it being advisable to call a halt to the advance of the civilisation of Europe in India it is necessary to speed up and widen its influence. Opportunities for national service, especially for the eminently national service of the defence of the country, must be thrown open to Indians on all sides. The old principles of Permanence and Custom have made India in history a thing to be bought and sold among the nations of the world. And if she is to be saved from the fate of her past, we must look beyond and outside her. Liberty and Progress have made the nations of Europe. And if India is to come into her own, Liberty and Progress must be enthroned in the private and public life of her people.

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